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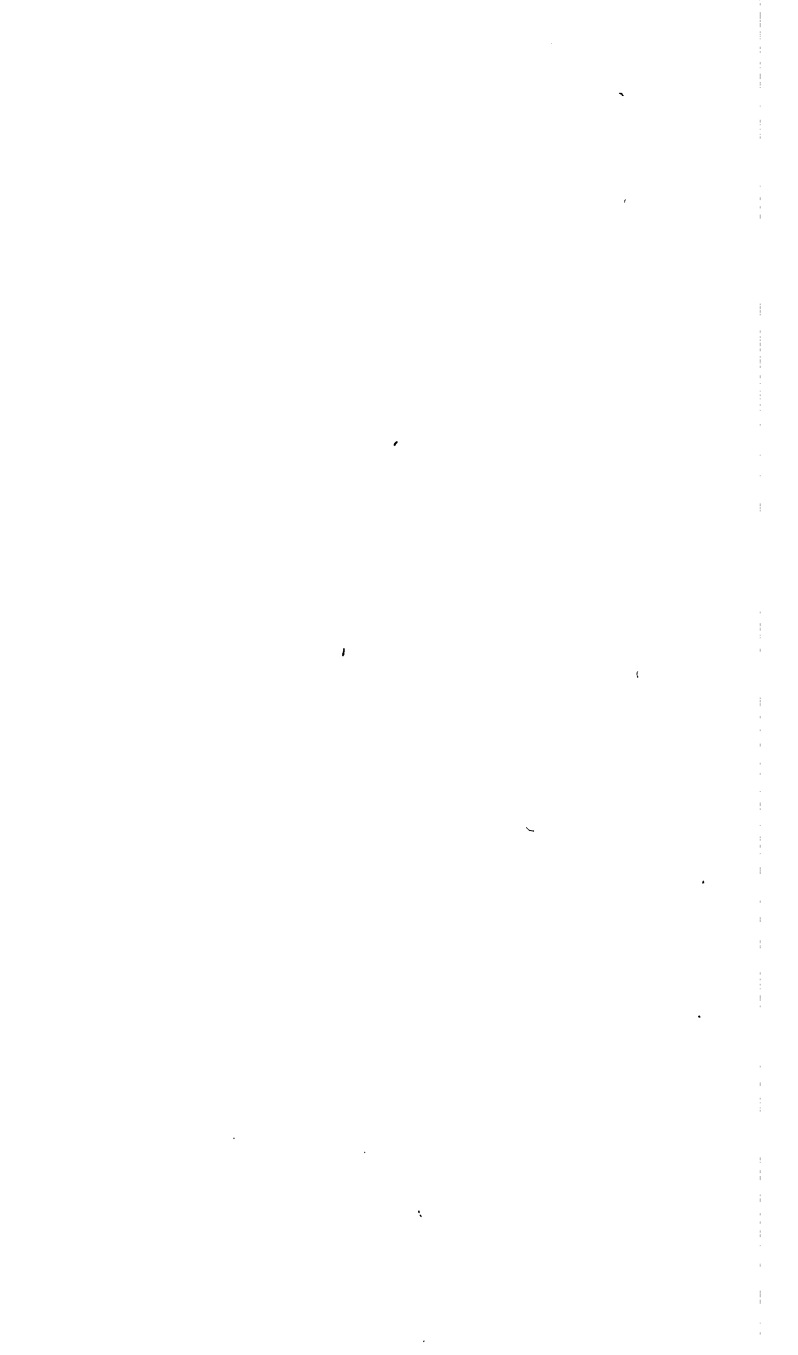


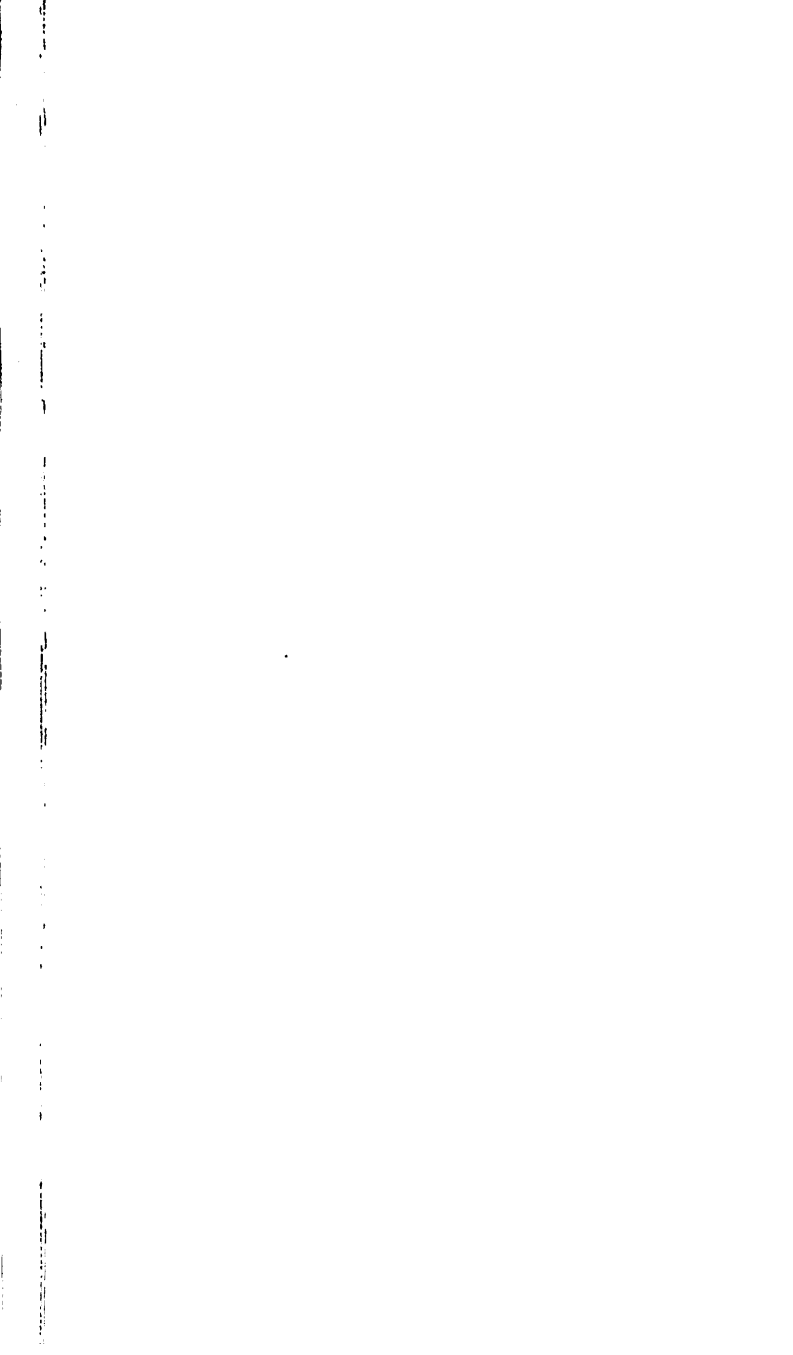
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MIRANDA ELLIOT:

OR,

THE VOICE OF THE SPIRIT.

BY S. H. M.



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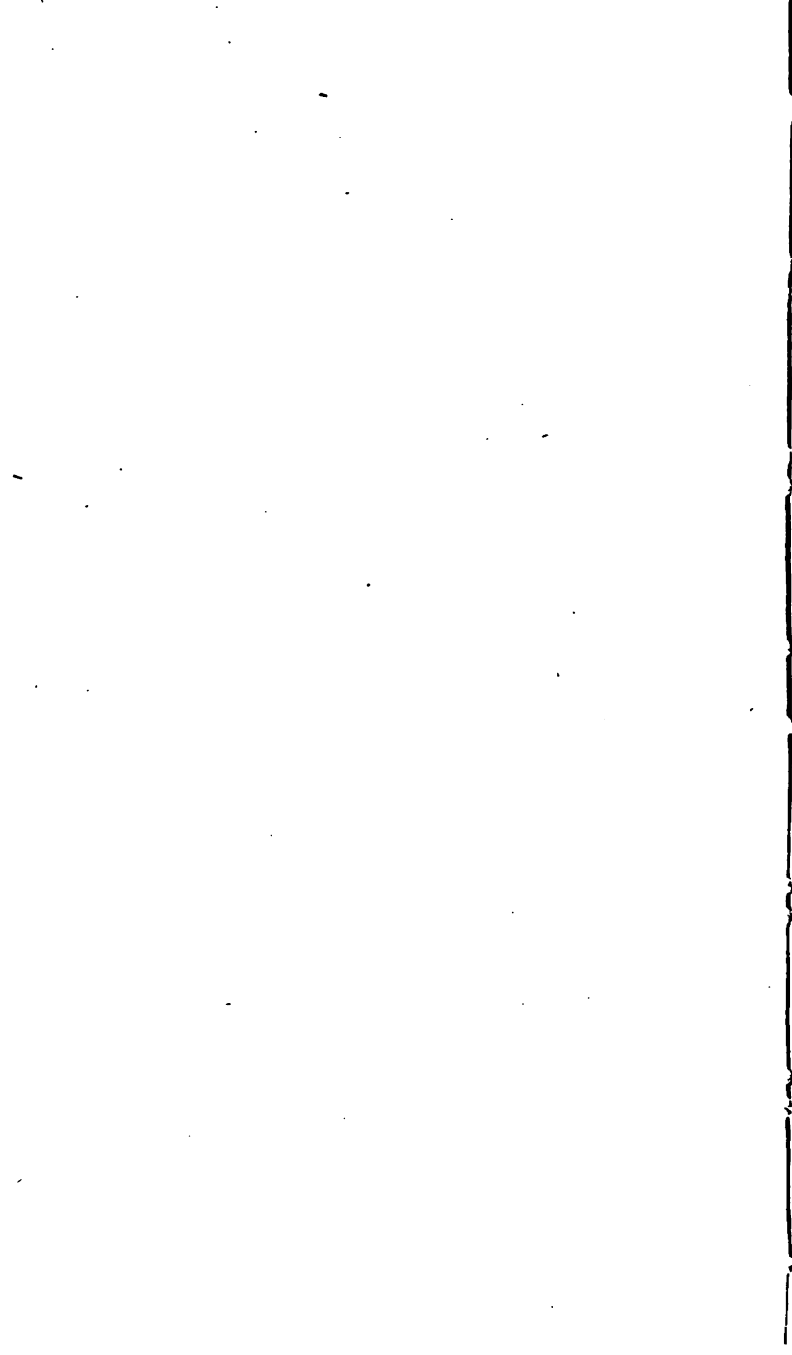
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TO
THE MEMORY OF
LIEUT. J. EDWARD MAXWELL,
This Book
IS AFFECTIONATELY INSCRIBED
BY
THE AUTHOR.



VOICE OF THE SPIRIT.

INTRODUCTION.

My life is the life which never dies ! My essence is the essence of angels, born in the regions of eternal light, and dwelling in the presence of Deity ! My perceptions are infinite, because they spring from an infinite source. My love of immortality is the strong instinct of the child for the parent—nay, more, for mortal things cannot express it. It is the love of the designed for the designer—the produced for the producer—like for like—the attraction of atoms for the mass—the strong aspiration of the weak particle, to be again mingled in with the mighty source—the ardent longings of the soul, to find repose in the long-lost home of the spirit of man !

Before the earth was apparent to the eye of sense, I dwelt in the world of unborn souls ! There, the mists of the morning never dispersed, for, to the folded spirit, there reigned around an eternal morn ! Undefined light, reflected on undefined images ! Repose, stillness, and an all-pervading inertia was borne along, on the swift and silent wings of space !

But the “breath of God” was to be linked with human life ; and, in the first struggles of a new-born babe, I look through the windows of mortality on the habitation of man. A consciousness—an identity—a separate existence is now

embodied. From being a part, I now become a whole. From being a breath, I am become a being!

An immortal spirit, linked with triple cords of life, to a sister spirit of mortal mould. Yes, there lay a babe, fair enough to look upon—eyes of heavenly azure, and locks golden as the light of day. Joy beams from its eyes—mirth's sweetest echoes sound in the merry roivings of its infant voice, and with it I am for ever and eternally united.

Then there is another undeveloped part of our united being dependent on immortality for life, on mortality for action; combining the essence of the upper and the eternal with the intuitions of the lower and the natural world.

Call it a harp of many strings, delicately strung, and as yet untouched. Call it a book of many leaves, as yet uncut, and unblotted with the marks of age and time. Call it a chain, with many links, partaking of the sublime attributes of Deity; with many partaking of the mere animal propensities of a human existence.

And this is mind—folded, but still intelligent. The mysterious union between the mortal and the immortal; between the never-dying spirit and the ever-dying clay; between that which must live for ever and that which will only triumph over death, when time shall be no more.

Stop, O Time, thy swift-revolving wheels, that I may have Eternity to calculate the importance of this period of existence.

Harmony as yet pervades our union. The senses rest in almost unconscious repose. To the sight unmeaning images are presented, though they glow with the rainbow colourings of life and light. To the hearing, unmeaning sounds, yet they fall sweetly on the infant sense.

To the sense of touch and smell no consciousness, while the sense of taste alone revels in the sustenance which nature provides. The outward elements now minister to this sense, and subserve the growth of this mortal part of immortality.

The mind lies almost dormant. The fancy vibrates gently in time of repose, and is the only chord of the many-stringed harp which answers as yet to the touch of the loving soul. The first murmuring of the harp; the ruffling of the first leaf of the mysterious book; the brightening into electric life, the first link of that immortal chain is now consummated, and, sleeping or waking, we are one; for in the purely mortal part there is a mysterious communication of that electric life which, pervading all space, is concentrated and refined in intelligent and accountable being.

And now, awakened into active operation, is the handmaid of the mind—the heart—that centre of human life. The source from whence this mysterious connexion is ever to receive in this life fresh impetus to live, to love, and to enjoy.

It throbs with the excitement of hope. It shrinks and trembles under the impulse of fear. It gushes forth with new life, when impelled by the emotion of love, and sinks with depression under the saddening influence of despair.

Mysterious and inexplicable fountain, that seems to be intelligent with motion and emotion. Unintelligent and unconscious as thou art, thou wilt yet act a serious part in the drama of life.

Prime minister of feeling—unconscious agent of the mind—both good and evil spirits will ere long cause the ebb and flow of thy gushing tide!

Joy lights the eye; smiles in the dimpling cheek of infancy; throbs in the young and tender heart, both to meet the eye of a loving parent, and to behold the glittering toy which pleases the eye and the fancy of childhood.

But, O Time! in the fast-approaching cycles of thy coming years is hidden the mysterious workings of this conflicting life. On the dial-plate of thy noted hours we count the moments as they fly; and as they fly, we live—for time or for eternity! For a brief and hurried throb of life, or for a calm, and elevated, and eternal being!

Thy finger points ever upward—downward—from the centre to illimitable space. From this brief point of time to the region of eternal, never-ending, all-pervading thought.

Receive, O child, the teachings of thy father, Time ! Direct the upward principle of thy mysterious union to a higher life. Encourage the aspirations of thy immortal after immortality. Brighten and vivify the links of thy electric chain, upon which God has breathed the spirit of his divine attributes of justice, mercy, benevolence, and truth.

Joy, then, may light the eye ; smile in the dimpling cheek ; throb in the young and tender heart. It will be in unison with the harmony of angels—the symphony of sweet sounds, which will be mingled in with their own, before the throne of the Eternal !

But control the higher faculties of the mind and soul ; crush that benevolence which seeks to do good to all ; misdirect that divine emotion which elevates our minds to the great First Cause ; counteract that principle within, which not only seeks justice for ourselves, but impresses on the mind the golden rule of “doing to others as we would they should do to us ;” hide from view, and bluntly disuse that executive power which not only teaches us the value of these emotions, but the importance of cherishing them, as an abiding principle of our united being ; let these links to divinity be neglected and forgotten, midst the rubbish and filth of a lower and imperfect nature ; joy may light the eye ; smile in the dimpling cheek ; throb in the tender and susceptible heart—it will only be a thrill from the lower links of that chain which binds to earth our sensual being. It will be less to meet the eye of a loving parent, than to seize with eager and selfish delight the glittering gems of earth.

CHAPTER I.

LITTLE Miranda Elliot was a favoured child of earth, for she was beloved and treasured as a gift from heaven !

Look at her, innocent, fair, and helpless, lying on her mother's lap. Her chest panting with the effort of breathing, as if the air of this world was all too heavy for her delicate lungs. Her lips parted, and the sweet breath passing between them, as lightly as an angel's sigh would fall on human ear. Her eyes a little open, and her eyelids trembling, as if in a state of half-awakened consciousness.

And there sits her father opposite ; and, leaning towards her, holds one soft, white, tiny hand in his own expansive palm. He is a fine-looking, portly gentleman, with a noble brow, dark hair, lightly silvered over, and a deep, intellectual eye ; and though seeming rather dignified and stately to stoop to tender displays, a parent's love expresses itself in a tear which glistens in his eye.

"You have no idea, my dear Maria," he said, looking fondly into the face of his wife, "how intensely I prize this child ! When you married me, a desolate widower, without one human tie, you little realized what consolation you would bring to a bereaved heart."

"It is an inexpressible joy to me, my dear husband, to hear you say that I have consoled you ; and now this little darling will add a new charm to the present and the future for us both."

"Yes, indeed it will ; for it seems to me that she has been sent from heaven to gratify the very necessities of my nature ; to bring back the joy I have felt once in being a father."

"Look at her, my dear," said Mrs. Elliot, "how she opens her bright, blue eyes, and looks upon you as earnestly as if she knew you !" And the father leaned forward, and gazed

into his infant's eyes as if he would read a lesson from the spirit-land—the home of the soul. But there was only a shadowing forth of the inner life, as unsatisfactory to his gaze as the “men as trees walking,” seen by the blind man in the Scriptures; and his eyes involuntarily followed the contour of her round, soft cheek, her throbbing neck, and rested on the little hand and arm which now almost struggled to free itself from his own.

“She looks at you now, Maria, as if she wanted what you alone can bestow. Give it to her, and in the mean time we will study the mysterious little being. As soft, and delicate, and perfect in every part, as the most delicate flower that trembles in the summer breeze; they both gather life, and strength, and growth, from the elements around them. But, just look at the little creature! How vigorously she draws in the sustaining fluid of her gentle being. Her very hand, which presses the fountain to give forth of its richness, attests to the inward joy, and her little heart seems to throb with intense excitement.”

“There is no doubt but that it is a very interesting process to her,” said the mother. “Nature gives strong instincts to desire where life is to be sustained, and I should think the first stage of human life a very perfect exhibition of that fact.”

“It is, indeed; for at that time ours is a purely physical being, the end and aim of which is to form a fit habitation for the abode of an exalted spirit.”

“I have often thought,” said Mrs. Elliot, “of the wonderful appliances of these elements which surround us. I remember speculating, when a child, on the probability that everything was made of the same materials, on the presumption that if I was made of dust, it would not be impossible.”

“There is not a leaf in the book of nature that would fail to excite our wonder; there is not a research that should unfold itself before our inquiring minds that would fail to excite our adoration, if we went to that study with thankful and

believing spirits. Yet these wonderful appliances of the elements that you speak of seem to exercise such a sustaining influence in nature, that many, who study deepest, forget Him who 'rides above the clouds, and who directs the storm.'"

"The mere materialist must, of all beings, lead a most objectless and dreary life," said Mrs. Elliot. "The idea that like the trees, and flowers, and herbs around us, we live our little span, and then return unheeded and unblest to our common mother, is wretched, indeed."

"Yes, for if so, why these aspirations? Why these inward longings of the mind? Why this superior organization of our physical being? Behold the tiny arm of this cherub babe! How delicate its appearance; and yet we know that it possesses bone, muscle, tendons, and nerves. Wonderful construction! Yet these are but the outposts of this refined mechanism, and woven in with them are the messengers that convey the life-sustaining fluid to the very tips of these taper fingers."

And thus the father went on, seeming to delight in contemplating the physical, if he could not reach the spiritual, life of his child.

"If we remove this arm," he continued, "it only decays like the stricken branch of a tree, and does not affect the life of the body. Still, from thence we may pursue these messengers to the fulfilment of their original design, and reaching the point from whence they diverge, and to which they converge, witness there the most wonderful revealings of this throbbing young life—the ruddy stream which is adapted to the formation of bone, muscle, tendons, and nerves. Here we have reached the citadel of life, the first physical organ of this physical life. Strike this, and human life ceases to exist."

"The heart is a very mysterious thing," said Mrs. Elliot, "even considered as a mere physical organ. It is, I know, all-important in maintaining life; but there is the stomach,

and its accessories, from which it receives its sustaining power, on the one hand, and on the other the brain, which certainly has the controlling influence over all. Indeed, if I had been born with a little less brain myself, I should be inclined to think that the mind lay in the stomach, for after all the heart would receive no blood, if it was not for the part which the stomach performs."

"The heart is as dependent upon the stomach for support, as it is upon the brain for direction," said Mrs. Elliot. "It is like the nave of a wheel, a point upon which all presses, and by which all are supported. The only independent principle in our being becomes emancipated from earth as soon as the heart and stomach cease to act in unison. Mortality then claims the body, and immortality the soul. But come, my dear, as the little one is laid in her cradle, let us take our evening walk in the piazza, and pursue this favourite topic of mine."

They passed out of the room, arm-in-arm, through a wide entry into the front piazza. This was a wide, old-fashioned, and comfortable promenade, extending the whole length of a large double house.

The shades of evening were falling fast over one of the loveliest spots on the sea-coast of Georgia; and as they pursued their quick, animated walk, the fresh sea-breeze imparted to them additional enjoyment.

"Perhaps," said Mr. Elliot, continuing the conversation, "you may often have felt surprise at the deep interest I take in everything connected with the physical being of man. You have heard enough of my life to know that I have suffered, as many other men have; but you do not know that I have suffered from ignorance on this very subject. This will account to you for the restless anxiety I have so often manifested with regard to your health. The one I first loved was a fair and gentle being, very intellectual, living in a poetic world of thought; but like a tree of quick and rapid growth, whose

branches absorb *that* nourishment which should sustain the roots, she grew into an angel, too pure and holy for this natural world."

"I can remember well," said Mrs. Elliot, "her shadowy form, and the pure expression of her countenance, as something which I looked up to with reverence."

"Her parents," continued Mr. Elliot, "were unfortunately entirely ignorant of the true nature of physical life, and they took no lessons from the animal life which surrounded them. They saw the trees grow, but they asked not if they were sustained by the constituent portions of the elements.

"They knew not of their delicate organization—their lungs, their fibres, their absorbents. They had children that grew around them, but like tender buds, they fell prematurely to the earth. The very air of heaven was denied to visit their cheeks with its fresh, invigorating breath.

"Carro was the last, and, strange to say, survived the treatment; but like a hot-house plant, which is forced upward to the bloom, and then is left exhausted, so it was with her.

"She left me with a tender bud, which soon followed her, to bloom in heaven!

"Then, Maria, I became an observer of Nature—external and internal—their relation, connexion, and dependence. I see that God bestows bountifully of his gifts to all; but to man above all. The vegetable world draws sustenance from the elements. The animal world, more highly organized, draws sustenance from the elemental and vegetable world, while some individuals, constituted with more independent and vindictive faculties, require the support of animal food. Man, the highest and most perfect organization, endowed also with judgment and with will, is permitted to draw from every fountain, according to his capacity or desire."

"Yet," said Mrs. Elliot, "I think man shows very little discrimination, though so munificently endowed and provided for; even animals select what is good for them, and reject

what is not. I can never forget the surprise of my young mind, when I first heard that animals, in feeding, always rejected poisonous plants."

"That is, indeed, a wonderful fact, and is owing to the very strong instincts, imparted by a connexion of the organ which gives a desire for food, with the nerves of taste and smell. I have no doubt that those who have argued on the intelligence of animals, have allowed that fact to have great influence on their minds."

"Yes; and I think there is something in that fact which exalts animals, as purely physical, over man, as pervertedly intelligent; for these pure instincts are the express language of God, written in their natures, which they obey. While in the higher nature of man he writes a more refined (and if I may so express it), a more generous language, which he disobeys."

"And the reason of that is," said Mr. Elliot, "because the language that is inscribed in our physical natures we allow our minds to remain ignorant of, and fancy that we will have to render no account for what we do not understand."

"And now, my dear," said Mrs. Elliot, "as you have arrived at the very portal of mental being, which is another subject altogether, let us pause, and enjoy this glorious moonlight. Look at that beam of silver, thrown across the bay. How the rippling waves dance and sparkle in the flashing light!"

"And besides the moonshine, which is a very *light* material, even you will acknowledge, my own 'petite Marie,'" said Mr. Elliot, "there comes something more substantial along with it in that fishing-boat."

"O, you unromantic, physical being!" said his wife, as she took his portly chin in her small, white hand, and shook it. "How could you think of a fishing-boat, surrounded, as we are, by the very *poetry of light*?"

"I not only think of one, dearest, but I see one, like a

dancing spark, far down in that beam of light; and soon you will hear, and feel, too, the poetry of a fishing-boat."

And there they stood, enjoying the moonlight, the sea-breeze, and the beautiful view far down the bay, even to the ocean. There they conversed rationally and pleasantly, till the boat loomed largely in the moonbeams, looking like a serpent moving along the waters, animated with an energetic and vigorous life.

Then faintly heard, at intervals, was music, borne on the sweet sea-breeze. Then more full it came, in gushing sounds of melody—the melody of the intuitive mind. Then it rose and fell with the measured pull of the oar, and at last burst upon the ear with distinct notes as they rounded a narrow strip of marsh, and rowed joyfully to shore. One voice sung the words alone, and then the chorus rang on the still evening air, in a loud burst of merry voices.

"We bring you fish from de sea, massa,

Fresh fish from de white sea foam;

CHORUS.] O ho!—pull, boys, hurrah!

We come for a welcome home,"

Was distinctly heard; and as they neared the shore they increased in ardour, till, reaching the still water, they rested on their oars, and the boat was seen to glide upon the soft, blue mud which edges the shore of the sea-coast of Georgia.



CHAPTER II.

IN the middle of a quaint, old-fashioned room, reclining on the carpet, is a blooming child. Her laughing eyes are as blue and joyous as the heavens above, when reflecting the light of a bright sunny day. Her polished brow as purely

white as the lily of the valley ; and her soft cheek tinged with the delicate blush of the sweet rose—while ever and anon, peeping up toward the pure surface, may be traced the blue pencillings of the blood-vessels. These give an idea of depth and transparency, which prompts an involuntary desire in the child-lover to hug and devour her with kisses—while even an indifferent looker-on would pronounce her to be a most perfect type of the Caucasian race. Her golden hair covers her head with soft, flat curls, and clusters around her brow, setting off to the best advantage a noble countenance.

She has a companion—one whose proportions are symmetry itself. Her rounded, perfect figure is now before my mind's eye—"petite" in height, "petite" in waist, "petite" in everything but soul. Her eyes were deeply, darkly blue ; and the light of a pure life shone out from them ever. They were fringed with long, black lashes, which added to their depth of expression. Her hair was black, and waving in regular outline on each side of the face, was confined low down on her head with a small silver comb. Her complexion was pale and pure, and gently tinged with red. Her lips parted and spoke of love ; and the dimples which played on each cheek when she smiled, were like the sunbeams of the heart. Her nose was Grecian ; and her shoulders—O what shoulders—how soft, and white, and perfect they were, in their elegant symmetry of form !

At this time she was dressed in a black crape, that hung soft and pliant around her figure—the waist tight ; and square-necked and edged with points of black silk, which served by contrast to make her neck appear still whiter. Her arms were partly bare, and looked like models, as she pointed out the figures on the carpet to her little pet, Miranda Elliot.

This carpet was an antique brussels of a very peculiar pattern, being woven in squares of different colours, and each square having different kinds of animals represented on them. This was a source of never-ending amusement to Miranda,

and gave birth in her mind to an ideal world, in which she wandered in groves, the beautiful palms, with their long, graceful, fan-like leaves waving above her head, while animals of various kinds walked about her, and, by their docility, acknowledging her their mistress and queen.

Anna Young was a sister of Mrs. Elliot, and took, although quite young, almost entire charge of her little niece, who loved her with the ardour of an affectionate nature. She looked up now, into her earnest, animated eye, with childish confidence, mingled with curiosity, to hear those tales of the elephant and other strangers that were scattered around her.

Thus her aunt wove for her many lessons of instruction from surrounding objects. The heart, the intellect, and the soul were all receiving the influence of her own pure nature; and, while they are mutually interested, we will visit other parts of the mansion, and take a view of the surrounding scenery.

Besides the carpet, there were other things about that room equally ancient both in design and manufacture. The fireplace was large, with deep sides, the front slightly arched; and instead of being plastered in the usual style, was lined at the back with a handsome wrought iron panel, while the sides were covered with tiles of the purest white china.

These designs were all Eastern, for Chinese pagodas, Turkish minaret, and Venetian gondolas were all there, as if done with the finest pencilling.

The panelings around the room, and the window frames, which were large and heavy, were all made of dark oak, while the papering on the walls was covered with clusters of the richest and most luscious-looking grapes, hanging in wild profusion from leaves of the brightest and liveliest green. The ceiling was most singularly painted to represent the sun, with his rays diverging from the centre on all sides.

I must not forget to mention the doors on either side of the chimney, the lower part panelled with dark oak, and the upper

part filled with small panes of glass. Through one of these could be seen silver, glass, and china of the finest quality. The other led into Mrs. Elliot's room, where she now sat by the side of another blooming daughter a few months old.

This room was Miranda's world within doors; and often then and after, did her busy mind imagine herself the heroine of some fairy tale in a brighter land than this.

I will not proceed without describing to you other mysteries about that house, as well as the associations connected with it. Indeed, it is only from outward objects that the mental web of our expanding intellect is woven. The memories of childhood! how they rise up and float aloft in bright imagery, bearing us back to the olden, careless, mirth-loving scenes of youth—or how often, even amid the more interesting and absorbing occupations of age, they creep unawares into the mind, and, like the refracted rays of the sun, impart to the vision once more the beams of departed day!

There were four rooms on the first floor, all corresponding in the general outlines of panelling, tiling, and papering, showing that an antiquated and foreign taste had attended to the most minute arrangements.

There was also a very wide hall with an imposing arch across the centre, made of oak and handsomely carved, from the middle of which hung a massive lamp of bronze and glass. A front piazza extended the whole length of the house; and wide steps of flag stones went from it down to the green grass, which met the eye on all sides, even until it joined the ever-rushing waves of the blue salt water.

The staircase, wide and dark, went up in a recess, in the back part of the hall, or entry, and landed at the entrance of a large room. This room extended from the front to the back of the house, and terminated at each end in a large bow window. The ceiling was arched and painted blue, to represent the heavens, while the walls were dazzlingly white, and shining with the most beautiful stucco.

Towards the front was a recess in which was a splendid piano of German manufacture. The front window opened to the floor, from which there was a balcony, extending to the edge of the wide front piazza. The railing around this balcony looked exceedingly light and graceful; and there were wide benches all around it. There was no roof over this summer-inviting spot; and the scene from it is now depicted on my mind's eye in living colours.

The first impression is an expanse of sky and water—for there, afar off on the horizon, they met; and the undulating line is ever there—sometimes white and dashing with the ocean's foam—sometimes tossed, seemingly to the distant eye, in joyous, playful billows—and then, at other times, like a child at rest, it lies in quiet slumber, as if no angry passions ever raged within its breast.

To the right, an island commences at the ocean view, and skirts the horizon till lost behind the mainland.

This mainland, commencing in a point, and curving in and out in those graceful lines which only nature can make perfect, is lost in the back-ground to the right—while between the mainland and the wide blue bay which runs in front of us and sweeps, in one wide expanse of water, to the ocean, are fields of marsh-grass, through which, at high tides, may be traced the creeks which run up to the different settlements.

The place from which this view is seen, is situated on an arm of the sea, and as I have said, presents a wide sheet of water to the ocean.

Within a short distance to the right, and opposite an old fort, it turns gracefully to the left and washes the bluff of this romantic spot.

Just in front of us there is a long narrow island of marsh, which, at high tide, looks like a strip of green ribbon, pointed at the ends, and floating on the blue water. While beyond this, over a still wider back river, commences the left mainland, which runs around in a wide extended curve to the back-

ground on the left. And yet, excuse me for a while, gentle reader—for it is only to the gentle, and to those who love simplicity and repose, that this will seem congenial—if I still dwell with interest upon this view, so captivating in memory to those whose minds have been formed amid its associations.

Amid the triumphs of nature, when this spot possessed no interest but as the Indian's haunt—when covered with lofty oaks, under whose shadow the Indian squaw sung her lullaby; or the maiden wooed her warrior with the soothing, gentle song of love; or when the calumet of peace sent its curling vapour upward among the boughs, lingering above the red men like a canopy of love—it must have presented a scene of magnificent and beautiful repose.

But now, when this towering bluff, which rises above the most ambitious heavings of the tempest-tossed ocean, is occupied by refined and cultivated minds—when the lofty oaks have given place to houses filled with happy faces, and surrounded with ornamental trees, leaving but one old, far-branching, solitary sentinel, to tell the tale of their past existence—when the eastern horizon, still bounded with its semicircle of never-fading green, has added to it, like a setting in the border, the substantial and beautiful evidences of social existence—it is indeed bewitching.

Nay, when we look a little to the right, and see rushing in through the only portal at the eastern horizon, the Atlantic, with its rushing tides and boundless associations, then it becomes sublime; and our thoughts are lifted up and expanded out to the borders of time itself, and even onward to the verge of that region which is boundless in the prospect, as well as in the comprehension of a mortal mind.

Around, on the edge of the mainland, as far as the eye can reach, are scattered settlements, which sometimes are thrown boldly out in the sun's bright rays; at other times they seem to recline, in touching beauty, amid the soft hazy atmosphere

of the sea; and at all times they give a refined finish to the panoramic, billowy view.

Even night does not throw a hasty veil over this familiar, well-loved scene; but a brightly-glowing fire-stand at every settlement, claims for each, a "local habitation and a name," till Somnus, with his drowsy powers, secures his tribute from humanity.

But why dwell longer on these features, which are ever here, in a secluded quiet existence? Away from the busy hum of men, God seems to impress his mind most forcibly upon creation, and to speak most plainly to the children of earth. Not that He ever manifests Himself feebly to mortal man; but when alone with the silent and solitary throbbings of our own hearts, and with but few accompaniments to gratify the longings of the soul for fellowship and love, we then turn with ardent desires to the great storehouse of our being, to fill the vacuum of our earthly life; and, alone with nature, we receive intuitions on the mind, which is the first language of the soul. And we feel that God is in the ocean at our feet—in the cloud that floats in silent majesty far above us—in the sunbeams that gild all nature with a golden light—and in the moon's soft rays. Nay more—we feel that He dwells within us, and the tenderest affections go out towards Him, as to a benefactor; and the heart, the fountain of animal life, sends through every nerve a thrill of ecstatic emotion.

CHAPTER III.

THE first faint blush of morning light, reflected from an abundant and hidden source, falls upon the drooping eyelids of mankind. The red rays gild the eastern sky with a line of precious light, and the dark curtain of night is gently

withdrawn from the view. Then all things within the vision stand out, bright and clear, in the effulgent glory of the king of day.

Thus, the first glimmering ray of conscientiousness from an infant mind, is a reflection of those everlasting truths which constitute the Eternal Mind! With him is light, and around him must all intelligences revolve—partaking from him, and tending to him—immaculate and divine! dwelling in the centre of all creation, where can exist no jarring influences. Let no wandering star, whose course is in darkness, attract us from the path which leads us to the presence and the abode of heaven!

The prattling voice of infancy, with the dawning light of heaven's truth within the mind, appeals to the reason and the love of those who have walked on, perchance, under the noon-tide radiance of God's providence; or, perhaps, the gentle child, who is as yet only brushing the dew from the pathway of life, may gather flowers for the lap of infancy which will impart, through their ever sweet perfume, lessons of immortality.

What says gentle Anna Young to the lisping voice of Miranda Elliot?

She has passed on from the dewy heath, and the clustering flowers of time, which taught sweet lessons to the heart and mind, and now looks up with a loving, teachable spirit to the eternal, the infinite Source of all good.

"We have no pretty flowers like these, Aunt Anna. Why did not God make us some, too?" prattled the little creature, as she prostrated herself on the carpet, before a bunch of bright flowers which decorated a portion of the border; for the carpet was still inexhaustible in affording topics of conversation which were instructive and interesting to her young mind.

"They do not suit our climate, dear child," said Anna Young, half abstracted by a book she had taken up.

"Well, what is the climate, then, aunty?"

"The atmosphere, the air we breathe; and that flowers cannot live without," replied Anna, still reading.

"Why, aunty," said the earnest little voice, "did not God make the air we breathe, and could not he make the flowers live, if he wanted to?"

"To be sure he could," said Anna, attracted by her earnest manner; "to be sure he could; but God does everything as he pleases; and some flowers suit this country, and some suit another."

"I don't see why they wouldn't suit," said Miranda, not smiling, and looking very impenetrable.

"Neither can you see God, Miranda. How do you think you would like to be taken from home, and carried to live in the far North, where those white bears live? There you would see nothing but fields of ice, and not a green leaf would ever meet your eye again. Do you think it would suit you?"

"O, no, I know it wouldn't," said Miranda, quickly, "it would be too cold for me."

"Well, but God has made people who live there; and they like it better than they would this place."

"But flowers can't feel, aunty," said the child, in a half-doubting tone; "and I wish God had given us some of these pretty flowers. I think they would suit here very well."

"Then, my dear, you think that you know better than God."

"O, no I don't, aunty," said the child, laying her hand on her aunty's lips; "but why wouldn't they do here? Did God say they wouldn't?"

"His not letting any grow here is just the same as saying so."

"Well, that is very strange to me," said Miranda, thoughtfully, "that God should talk in the flowers. I wish the flowers would whisper in my ears about God; I would love them more than ever."

"Do you not think," said Anna, "that is a very pretty language that speaks in flowers?"

"Yes, I do."

"Remember, then, that lesson, when you see a flower, that you see in it the mind of God! God's thought in a flower! A flower, that is only made to please us by its beauty and its rich perfume, speaks to us of God! It tells us that he is wise and good."

"God is very good," said Miranda, embracing Anna, and giving her a fervent kiss; "and he knows what is right, and I will always love him *first*."

On a projection of the wharf, in front of Mr. Elliot's house, were five mounds of earth, -once used for cannon, but now completely covered with a rich foliage of green grass.

There, hand in hand, Anna Young and Miranda Elliot were soon running up and down, for exercise; and their small yet perfect figures stood out in bold relief against the background of blue, sparkling, moving waters.

There was the miniature woman, with a firm soul, and a well-trained mind; and there the miniature girl, with a tender heart, and a teachable spirit, just learning to look up from the beauties of this life to the Source and Fountain of all beauty.

CHAPTER IV.

MR. ELLIOT was deeply interested on every subject connected with natural life; and this, as he has said, -was forced upon him by circumstances most painful to a sensitive mind, and deeply affecting the happiness of his early life. His present treasures he prized with an earnestness absolutely nervous -so much so, that they constituted a part of almost every scene in which he bore a part himself.

If he walked in the piazza, it was in a period of recreation, and his wife was by his side. Little Miranda was either in sight, or her voice, ringing its merry roundelay, was heard not far off; while "Old Elsy," the nurse, might be seen, either sitting on the steps, jumping "little missey," or drawing her in her straw carriage along the grassy bluff.

Mrs. Elliot's mind, from such continued companionship, had become a reflection of his own, only more spiritual.

She oftener struck the higher chords of action, thus living more in an atmosphere of devotion, and in the exercise of that divine feeling, which was heaven's first, best gift to man. She believed in the existence of a calm atmosphere in the region of thought, to which the mind could retire, as it were to a sanctuary, from the irritating contentions of life, as well as the agitations of one's own nature.

This gave to her countenance an impression of repose, and to her manners, rather more reserve than coincided with ideas of great sociability. Yet, in all her intercourse with society, she was bland as well as dignified, and to her intimate friends there were streams of sunshine lighting up the symmetrical fabric of her character with graceful touches of beauty.

Mr. Elliot was often engaged in intellectual pursuits; and it was interesting to see the quiet group collected in and around his library, a part of almost every day; and one of these we will describe.

He sits opposite to Mrs. Elliot, writing, while she is engaged with her needle-work.

Miranda is engaged in building a house of blocks, in one corner of the room; and at the raising of every new structure she appeals, either by action or voice, to her mother for her approbation.

Little Ella is taking her morning nap in her cradle, which is in Mrs. Elliot's room, across the entry and in sight.

Mom Elsy sits by the side of it, mending a tiny red shoe, belonging to "little missey," as she invariably called her.

Mom Elsy is a small, neat-looking old lady, who has a very black shining skin, seeming by its polish and texture (for it was exceedingly smooth and fine) to make some compensation for the entire absence of the much coveted hue of the white races.

One would very justly suppose from Mom Elsy's appearance, that she was brought up in the old school, when there was great stress laid upon the dress, for she prided herself not a little upon some articles of her apparel.

For instance—a white muslin kerchief was always laid in smooth and regular plaits over her bust, the ends disappearing under an apron of the same spotless hue. While upon her head, another of the same material invariably surmounted her good-natured, happy countenance, towering up into the air with imposing grandeur.

Although Mom Elsy, with her matronly and peaceful air, might be considered quite a curiosity north of "Mason and Dixon's Line," she was no curiosity in the Elliot family, or at the South, where, in the character of head nurse, the "maumas" feel as responsible for the physical well-being of their charges, as the mothers for their mental advancement. And they become as respectable in their class, as the performance of duty could make them anywhere in the world.

But we must leave this quiet pair. Little Ella to the enjoyment of her nap, and Mom Elsy to rock the cradle gently when she stirs, and to murmur soft words of endearment, which, like the wild notes of some woodland bird, might sound uncouth and strange to civilized ears, yet fall gently and full of meaning upon the nurslings of its love.

Mrs. Elliot has now laid down her work, and drawn a large portfolio before her, from which she is reading on sheets and half-sheets of paper, "Snatches of Thought, written in idle moments." We will peruse with her a piece on the "Affinity of Parents and Children:"

“Like the ministering spirits sent from above to minister to the afflicted and trusting of the children of earth, so are parents given as ministering angels to the infant world.

“They watch, with intense interest, the young, expanding bud of life—they impart to it the sustenance necessary to a physical existence; and with that affection springing from the strongest instincts of nature, they throw around their precious charge the protecting arms of a devoted love.

“The opening dawn of human life sheds but a faint and glimmering ray; and on the closed perceptions of the infant mind beams with an uncertain light. Then it is, that in the sight of God, they are numbered among the redeemed of earth, ‘for of *such* is the kingdom of heaven.’

“As the snow, which rises from the earth in vapours, and, by some inexplicable and uniform law of nature, receives the impress of purity and refinement, and is then returned to earth to be again mingled with its dross, so it is with children. They are the most refined portions of our physical being, returned to earth as pure as the snow-flake on the mountain’s brow, soon to mingle in with and imbibe the impurities of time and sense.

“The changeless law of nature, which acts always uniformly on inanimate life, again exhales the vapour from the earth, stamps it with the same distinctive forms of purity, and returns it to the earth again in feathery showers of light and beauty.

“Can we ever cease to wonder at this beautiful mechanism of nature, which brings purity from impurity, brilliancy from blackness—that which we never see without admiring, from that which we never see without wishing to shun?

“The hand of the Designer is here predominant and unmistakable, for the object acted upon is a passive negative agent; and, in fact, so are the materials of animal life until brought into action by combination.

“Therefore, we see the same purifying result—the same re-

ference to first principles—the same honouring of the natural laws of God.”

Mrs. Elliot is evidently interested in reading these new additions to her husband's scrap book. Her eyes rest for a moment on Miranda, who is now amusing herself with pictures. Many thoughts, vague and undefined, float through her mind; but uppermost is an earnest desire that, after mingling in with and imbibing the impurities of earth, that child might be purified by the power of those laws, adapted to an exalted nature, and which find full perfection and full fruition only in the presence of the Eternal!

“A few Ideas of Life,” now arrest her attention, and we too will follow her eye:

“The lowest order of life is that which possesses neither consciousness nor self-propelling action, and is governed by fixed laws, always acting uniformly and producing the same results.

“The highest order of life is that which possesses consciousness, and that self-propelling action which is the result of mind. This is produced by germs springing from like organizations, and originating in the beginning and throughout the entire chain (like all creation), from the Eternal Mind!

“They are also governed by fixed laws; but the independent faculties of mind lead them to substitute laws for themselves, and thus usurp the authority of their wise and bountiful Creator. These qualities give to them the distinction of accountability, and lead, in their final tendency, to another state of existence.

“Combining in their superior life the elements, and more than the importance, of all the lower order of beings, they not only enjoy the benefit of those laws affecting them, but every law of nature finds a necessity in the nature of man.

“Indeed, as one order of life advances beyond another, the advancing necessities of that order find a ready response in the ever-expansive and abundant storehouse of nature; and

man, standing pre-eminent above all, finds in his nature necessities and conditions infinitely transcending all.

“The laws of nutrition and the laws of motion, which first govern animal life, also first govern human life; but how soon it is that the combining propensities of man deviate from the simplicity of those laws which act uniformly on merely instinctive animal life!

“The senses, which in animals serve only the necessities of their existence, conduce in man to the development of every faculty of his exalted mind; while those faculties in turn serve to enhance and refine the degree and excellence of his sensual enjoyment.

“Thus, for instance—while the sense of taste and the sense of smell in instinctive animals direct alone to the selection of proper food, imparting sufficient enjoyment to make that food pleasant and agreeable, to man they afford a boundless fund of exquisite pleasure. The sweet perfume that loads the air is brought to his delighted sense by every balmy breath of spring. The fruits of every clime increase the enjoyment of these senses, by delighting also the senses of sight and touch; and, without being epicurean, all may testify to the delightful sensation of taste.

“While the sense of sight directs their wandering steps from danger, and guides them in their search for food, it adorns the footsteps of man through life with pictures from nature, which feed the imagination, delight the heart, and elevate the mind. It is through this sense alone that man can appreciate the externally beautiful.

“The sense of hearing, which in animal life either stands like a sentinel, to warn them of a coming foe, or lure them on to the instinctive duties of parental life, in man conduces to the most ecstatic enjoyment. Nature, teeming with sweet sounds, soothes the listening ear—delighting him with the harmony of birds—the soothing melody of descending waters, seeking their level, perchance through the purling brook, the

dashing rivulet, or down the foaming cascade. And then again, the sighing winds often speak through the sense of hearing to the heart, bearing the mind in delighted fancy to distant lands, where loved ones dwell.

“The sense of feeling, thrown over the whole animal body, guarding it from the attacks of enemies, is like an ægis of protection provided for the defenceless, by a careful and beneficent hand. But this is not all that feeling does for mere animal life. It forms the all-pervading medium between the external and internal senses—between those which convey the impressions from an outer world, to those which transmit the impressions from an inner nature. Defined by a *touch*, yet pervading every other sense, like a shield to guard them from destruction. Conveying to the perception the least sensation of pain, and conveying from it the most exquisite sensation of animal enjoyment.

“The heart and the spine are organs possessed alike by all animals; and as the fountain of life to ourselves, and the physical source of life to others, they are acted upon by every gushing tide of either instinctive or highly organized life.

“We see feeling rise in the ascending scale of instinctive faculties, developing itself to our observation in the joyful bark or the angry growl of the dog—in the purring of the cat, which speaks content, or the angry flashing of her eye, which speaks revenge—in the fluttering heart of the imprisoned bird, or the joyful notes that welcome her native woodland. And if, in mere animal life, it accompanies and impels the exercise of every instinct, much more in man, with whose higher faculties it maintains a still higher and stronger union.

“Man thrills with desire, and gratifies it. He is impelled by anger, and seeks, through the impulse of revenge, the destruction of his enemy. He aims at the acquisition of whatever ministers to his pleasure.

“These are the manifestations of animal feeling in man, identified by consciousness, that consciousness which is the

concentration of feeling in the mind—the deep current into which all other feelings rush, and on whose dark bosom they are borne onward to eternity.

“Now rise still higher in the scale, and around the social faculties is thrown a higher charm than the mere gratification of desire.

“The love of the good, and the admiration of the beautiful, increase his happiness to unlimited extent; and even his exertions in behalf of others impart delight, because hope, which stands between faith and love, is engrafted in his nature, and is ever looking forward to fruition as his reward.

“Then still higher, and fixed deeply in his nature, is *justice*, which not only balances the deeds of others, but his own before a higher tribunal.

“It is as if the inflexible eye of God was still reflected down within his lost image, ever ready to guide him upward as long as he looks beyond the guidance of mere animal instinct.

“But even this is not the crowning glory of feeling in man. It gilds the summit of his mind with a divine light, enabling him to look beyond the veil, into a higher life, and filling his mind with sublime devotion for an infinitely superior being.”



CHAPTER V.

“How do you like those ideas, Maria?” said Mr. Elliot, who now drew his chair nearer to his wife, and took Miranda in his lap.

“I like them very much, indeed,” said Mrs. Elliot. “The sense of feeling is a most mysterious thing. It reminds me of electricity, which, though distinct in its attributes, enters into the organization of every department of nature, as this

same sense of feeling does into every faculty of the mind, and every emotion of the soul."

"Yes, and you might also add every fibre of the body; for there is not an emotion of the inner being that does not send a swift messenger to the outer world, when it strikes the chords of feeling. The smile, the tear, the contraction of the brow, the curl of the lip, the grasp of the hand, and even the hasty tread, are all outward indications of inward emotions."

"This is certainly so," said Mrs. Elliot, "and these outward signs indicate the April season of the mind, when clouds and sunshine alternately flit across the heaven of its repose. There comes also to the mind the dreamy month of June, when the quiet air is laden with the summer heat, and inertia creeps in upon the spirit of man. But these are not the only seasons mirrored in the soul. Often, when least expected, the November blast, with its blustering storm, breaks the weary spirit from its quiet moorings, in its fancied haven of rest; and finally comes the winter of the spirit, when it turns from the outer world, and looks within and upward, for comfort and repose."

"Your figures are very appropriate, my dear," said Mr. Elliot; "happiness is ever the aim of man in this world, and through whatever path we pursue it, we must experience all the phases of the different seasons—the spring, the summer, the autumn, the winter. How happy he who can early and habitually learn to control the turbulent feelings of his animal nature, and live within the pure atmosphere of a higher region! Even his winter, then, would be like the winter of the vegetable world, rich in the fructifying germs of a new spring."

"And how delightful is the thought," said Mrs. Elliot, "that this very feeling that we possess—ecstatic, blissful sensation as it often is, connected even with mere earthly enjoy-

ment—may be purified and elevated above this world, and even unite us again to a heavenly existence!”

“This is, indeed, the crowning glory of our earthly life,” said Mr. Elliot; “for although we may, by living above our lower nature, feel a serene happiness in the love of everything noble and good; and though the intuitions of our minds,—which is the only language of the soul in man,—should enable us to delight in the exercise of perfect self-control, and even in a sublime love of the great First Cause, we here stand powerless before those spiritual laws which in this life only commence their influence.”

“And here comes in that redemption through faith,” said Mrs. Elliot, “which is so necessary to our spiritual existence, and so beautifully adapted to our necessities as physical beings.”

“Now, mamma, I know you are talking about the angels,” said Miranda, looking up from a picture-book, over which she had been leaning on the table while they were conversing; and finding them still disposed to go on, she laid her hand on her mother’s arm, and shook it, saying—

“Say, mamma, are you not talking about the angels?”

“Not exactly, my daughter; why did you think so?”

“Because you talked about heaven and love; and I know angels live in heaven, and love all the time.”

“We were saying, my dear, that if we lived near to God, we would be good when we die, and live in heaven, too.”

“God would have to help us, then, mamma,” said the little prattling tongue.

“Why do you think so, Miranda?”

“Don’t you know my prayer says, ‘Give me a clean heart’? and that is asking God to help me to be good. Is it not, mamma?”

“Yes, it is, my dear, and I am glad that you remember it so well: but now it is time for lunch and exercise; so come, my little pet.”

"And I will go, too," said Mr. Elliot, as he followed them first to the closet, and then into the back piazza, which was wide and shady, having a nine-pin alley, and a swing in it, for the convenience of in-door exercise.

Two immense orange-trees towered far above the shed, throwing their branches down so low as to be within reaching-distance from the steps, which consisted of two flights, built from a platform, all of solid masonry, supported on a massive arch, and finished off with a parapet, at least two feet wide, of the same solid work, covered over with a hard cement.

This was the best possible arrangement for gathering oranges from such trees; and as the designer of the house was the planter of the trees, we may suppose that they were meant to be united. At any rate we shall consider them so in this slight memento to their past existence.

Even Anna Young, with her tiny figure, could almost hide her head amid the umbrageous foliage, and pluck the golden fruit; and often, when she failed to reach them, Helen Rose, a friend of hers—of whom we will tell you more hereafter—lent her aid, or in case of need, Mr. Elliot would come to their assistance.

Even now Anna and Helen, who have just returned from a walk, are there. Helen's white cottage bonnet is thrown over her head, and hangs behind her, caught by the loop of her cherry-coloured strings, which remain uncut, perhaps for the very purpose of allowing her to do the same whenever she pleases.

Her complexion, like some pure fountain showing beneath its limpid depths the sources of its existence, reflects through its clear surface the delicate veins, and exhibits on the cheek the rich tinge of the current of life. Her soft hazel eyes express the innocent gayety of her heart, and her auburn curls, in their silky magnificence, hang in profusion to her waist.

She is seated on the parapet, conversing playfully with Mr. Elliot, who is standing on it, and handing her an orange,

while Anna, who looks herself almost like a child, is romping with Miranda at the nine-pin alley.

Mom Elsy comes out in the middle of this scene, holding little Ella in her arms, and declaring,

"Dem bad gals wake my little missey."

"Now, Mom Elsy," said Helen, her face beaming with animation, and her arms extending to take the sweet child, "you know little Ella has just woke up to see me, don't you?"

"I don't know any such ting, Miss Helen; but I know *dis* ting, little missey neber *kin* sleep when you gals *excisin*."

"Well, that is all right; little missey must exercise, too, must she not, darling?" said the lively girl, kissing and jumping the delighted child.

Mom Elsy stood aside, looking with delighted eyes upon the laughing pair, and at last said—

"Well, anyhow sleep is de best physic for little babies; dey grow healty, and dey grow good, when dey sleep nuff."

"I expect," said Mr. Elliot, smiling, "that Elsy thinks that angels visit them in sleep; don't you, Elsy?"

"To be sure I do, master," said the old lady, curtsying low; "wheneber Miss Ella laugh in her sleep, I know, sir, dat de angels are talking to de little darling. And don't you know de hymn, master, says to de little babies, 'holy angels guard dy head?'"

"O, yes, I believe I have heard *that* at least *once a day* since you have been nursing the children, Elsy," said Mr. Elliot; "and you believe in hymns as much as you do in the Bible, don't you?"

"*Not quite*, master," curtsying again; "but dey go togeder, sir, and if de one tells de troot, de oder *ought to*."

"You are right, Elsy," said Mr. Elliot; and the old lady went smilingly away, sure that her master was of her opinion about these angel visits.

"And where have you been roving this beautiful morning,

young ladies?" said Mr. Elliot, walking up to the group, who were all engaged in earnest conversation.

"*Guess*, brother," said Anna, looking archly up at him from under her thickly-fringed eyelids.

"You little rogue, you!" said Mr. Elliot, "any one could *know* that you were born in the vicinity of the line."

"Equinoctial?—Very well," said Anna; "*now guess*."

"Well, you went up the Oak-forest Road, because that was the shadiest from the morning's sun; then through the woods, building castles in the air, and gathering wild-flowers, till you reached the Pine Grove on the Big Road, then home."

"Well, anybody could know that you were not born under the guessing-line, wherever that may be; but, to tell you plainly, Helen and I have been to see poor Mrs. Christian."

"Ah! and how is she, now?"

"Still palsied, poor old lady!" said Anna; "but such Christian resignation I never witnessed. Although she cannot express it by words, it can be seen in every feature of her countenance."

"Have her children recovered from the consternation they felt at her first attack?"

"O, yes, they are all at work, and Miss Eliza keeps everything as neat as ever."

"And did you notice, Anna," said Helen, "that though they were at work, the girls found occasion every now and then to pay her some attentions: and then they would look so earnestly at her, as if they wished to read her inmost thoughts?"

"Yes, I did," said Anna, "and I think they would be better satisfied if she could have a servant, who attended her all the time."

"That would relieve *their* anxiety," said Mrs. Elliot, "without perhaps adding to *her* comfort. A strange servant would scarcely feel the necessary interest in so helpless an invalid;

and her kind feelings would prevent her complaining, unless absolutely necessary."

"What can be done for them then, dear sister?" said Anna.

"We can aid them in other ways, so far as to enable one of the girls to devote their time to her. Then she will have the ministrations of love around her, soothing her last hours, for I fear she will never recover."

"Your plan is decidedly good, sister," said Anna, apparently relieved, "for nothing can equal their tact and feeling in aiding her every movement; and at the same time, Helen," she said as if impelled by a sudden remembrance, "we can carry on our plans, can't we?"

"O yes," said Helen, archly, "with *closed doors*."

"How mysterious you all are," said Mr. Elliot; "what is it you are going to do?"

"*Guess*," said Anna; but she took care to skip beyond her brother's reach this time.

"You know I *can't* guess, and that I am constitutionally opposed to it, you little sinner."

"Well, I will tell you what it is," said Anna. "We intend spending at least two hours a day *in paradise*, for some time to come."

"Ah, you had better stay longer than that," said Mr. Elliot; "but I have found out more than half your secret now, so I will leave you to make your arrangements."

And if my reader feels any desire to know them, they were simply these: That as they had no independent purses of their own, they would devote some of their time, between study hours, to working for Mrs. Christian's benefit; and it is no wonder if their glowing young hearts throbbed with the delightful anticipations of those hours of pleasure.

Helen's and Anna's houses were only separated by a street; and voices in that quiet place could be heard very plainly from one to the other. Just then, a sweet, clear voice said, "Nancy, run over and call Miss Helen to dinner."

"There is my talisman, dear Anna," said Helen, rising; "my mother's voice always rings in my heart like a silver bell; but remember, we meet again this afternoon."

And she darted away through the yard, and across the green street, like a spirit of light, as she was to all who knew her.

CHAPTER VI.

A MERRY peal rings out from the village bell. Quick, hearty, and vigorous the impetus that gives it life, animation, and voice. Soon, the streets teem with young, throbbing life, hastening onward to the school-room. Girls with books, and bonneted. Boys with hats or without them—running or walking, talking as intent on some lesson, parsing or algebra—history or geometry—the head of the class increases in interest to their expectant minds.

They hurry on like the flitting hours of time, and they all tend to one point, the Academy.

The boy who rings the bell looks on gayly at the scene—auburn curls cluster around his fair, open brow; dark, hazel eyes watch the passing groups as they go near by, or pass in perspective before him.

He stands directly under the cupola of the small market-house, on a large block, sawed from the body of a dead live-oak. This serves two purposes—as a stand for bell-ringers and a place for cutting up meat.

Simplicity! thy dwelling-place is found in village life, away from the great gathering places of mankind!

"Necessity has no law," says the sensualist, who has adapted his tastes to the excitement of art, and who covers up necessity—real necessity—under a mass of spices, and condiments, and works of virtue, till *necessity* has no meaning, and *want*

no end—cents merge into dollars—dollars into hundreds—hundreds into thousands, till his fancy becomes one large tree, whose branches extend to every side, laden with abundant fruit. Groceries and dry-goods—cutlery and hardware—bread-stuffs and meats of richest flavour—brilliant saloons and the richest draperies that the most vivid imagination can portray—while wines of the most luscious bouquet flow abundantly around.

“Necessity has no law,” or, “my tastes demand them, and they must be gratified.”

“Necessity has a law and a meaning,” is the language of one who adapts his outward wants to the law of his inner nature. He scorns neither the tributes of nature or of art; but the laws of his mind govern his senses; and his tastes are formed on the refined and elevated basis of thought, reflection, and adaptation.

Necessity is not obscured under a false show—neither is it distorted into the mere luxuries of a depraved and unguided taste; but it stands out boldly as a law of his nature, an impelling cause for adaptation—adapting itself to the continual elevation of his mental nature; and bringing into the granaries of an ever-refining taste, the offerings of God.

But the bell still rings, and the bright-eyed, auburn-haired boy is concentrating all his power for the close of his summoning peal. He waves his hat to a companion coming down the bay, as he jumps from the block, leaving the sound of the bell to vibrate on the still air, till it dies entirely away.

“Well, Jack, why didn’t you come out last night to look at the stars, boy? We had a glorious time!”

“Because I had to go to Greece, young gentleman, with a sage for a mentor, and shepherds as companions.”

“Well, we had the mentor without the sage, and shepherdesses instead of shepherds; but I thought you promised to come with Maria Kingston?”

“But Maria Kingston and I both had to go to Greece.

Don't you know we are in the same class?" and slapping his friend upon the shoulder, he added, "Now for a race, Harry Cleveland!"

They were within sight of the Academy, and not until they reached the steps side by side, did they abate their speed. They entered the broad entry which ran through the building, where on one side hung the bonnets of the girls, on the other the hats of the boys.

"There is the sign of a new scholar, Jack," said Harry, pointing at the bonnets; "you see that new bonnet?"

"What colour is it, Harry? for I dare say you can tell that too, can't you?"

"To be sure I can, boy: it's sky blue. It must belong to a fairy or an angel."

"Well," said Jack, "come; we will soon see."

As the boys entered the school-room, they saw Miranda Elliot standing beside the teacher's chair.

"I told you so," said Harry, whispering to Jack as they took their seats; "I told you it was a fairy!"

"She is passing *fair*, if not a fairy," said Jack Hinton.

"*Silence!*" said the teacher, with tremendous emphasis.



CHAPTER VII.

YEARS had gone by, and Miranda Elliot had in truth become a scholar at the public school. In the mean time, Anna Young had spent much of her time in Virginia, while Helen had remained in the village school, improving her naturally good mind by regular study; and, like the wild hedge-rose, which attains the perfection of delicate beauty, under the shadow of its own vine leaves—she was attaining rare perfection in the midst of home, and the associations of simple village life.

There had been frequent reunions of our circle, and to it there had been one addition—a fine, robust boy, now five years old, whose name was John.

Helen and Anna had kept up that union of sentiment and feeling, which had always made them congenial; and now Miranda, well grown physically, and mentally much better grown, formed another link, which each took pleasure and pride in cherishing.

Miranda was now a truly thoughtful girl, drawing her own conclusion of circumstances and things; and as we wish to show the influences that had formed her character, we will glance back at the past years in which we have lost sight of her.

She had been watched and nurtured like a tender bud. If any early traits of temper or of self-will had exhibited themselves, they were carefully controlled; and in a way that taught her their sinfulness, as well as their adverse influence on her happiness. With the earnest, loving care of her parents and her aunt, the petals of her opening life began to show beautifully the rosy tints; but like the flowers, which receive their richest hue from exposure to the light and heat, so, human buds must be placed amidst the roses of the parterre, to receive strength and beauty, and bear comparison with kindred flowers.

Miranda had indeed the loveliest traits of mind and disposition—slight circumstances had served to develop her understanding, and already she had learned to examine herself.

The record of a child's life may seem silly; and yet, if "coming events cast their shadows before," why should not the memories of childhood trace rays of sunlight across the pages of the mind, which will brighten the rugged pathway of life?

Miranda's thoughtful nature had exhibited itself in very early youth.

Mrs. Elliot's next door neighbour was a widow. Mrs. Car-

ter was an old lady, and her only companion was a pale, gentle grandchild; fragile in body, and precocious in mind. Her parents were both dead; and it seemed as if the fatal bereavement had left over the whole house a sober, quiet spirit of repose—resting with peculiar weight upon this child, the only scion they had left on earth.

Miranda often enticed her with her joyous manner, to engage in her afternoon's romp upon the green, or to join in playing "ladies" or "move-house" in the market, which was quite near.

But when the twilight hour came, she was always seated by her grandmother on a little stool, holding her hand, and looking up with her gentle eyes, seeming to enjoy with her soul the luxury of those quiet moments. This was the being who was Miranda's first friend.

A sweet little white rose she was, that was worn for awhile on a mortal breast.

Eliza Carter became ill, and elicited much attention from Mrs. Elliot, who watched over her with the devotion of a mother. One day, after returning from her bedside, Miranda met her with an anxious face, saying,

"How is Eliza, mother?"

"She is no better, my darling: she is very ill."

"Don't you think, mother, that God will make her well? Eliza is so good."

"She is not better than the angels in heaven are, my dear; and I am sure not so happy."

"But she loves God, mother. Eliza told me so."

"Then, the Bible says, my dear, 'that all things work together for good to those who love God.'"

"But, mother, do you think Eliza will die?" burst forth in a passion of grief. She buried her head in her mother's lap, and wept bitterly. Mrs. Elliot waited, for she felt that these early showers were necessary to the growth and proper development of this human plant. The heart, with its affections, must neither be rudely crushed; or on the other hand, forced

into unnatural forms. The child-like mind ascends to God as the great First Cause; and whether in sorrow or in joy, gratitude and trust finds its rest and hope in Him.

In a few days after, a long procession moved over the grass. It did not look like one of gloom and sorrow, for the bier was white—the little coffin was white—and white flowers were strewn profusely around the reposing form.

A long line of children, dressed in white, walked two and two, for Eliza Carter was a lovely child, and was beloved by all. The sun shone with a bright, soft light; and it was one of those days that seem as if angels are hovering around to soften down the evil of man's nature, and to catch good thoughts and record them above.

Miranda walked beside her mother, for she was not one of the school children who had the privilege of walking nearest to the bier; but there was not among them a sadder spirit, with regard to her own loss, or a more confiding one in the happiness of her friend.

The procession moved on over the wide green pathway to the tomb. The bier and the children first—the ladies next—then followed the pastor and physician in their long white scarfs and bands, and the gentlemen of the village. They sang these words:

“The lilies of the field,
That quickly fade away,
May well to us a lesson yield,
For we are frail as they.

“Just like an early rose,
I've seen an infant bloom;
But death perhaps before it blows,
Will lay it in the tomb.

“Then let us think of death
While we are young and gay,
For God who gave our life and breath,
Can take them both away.

"To God who made them all,
Let children humbly cry,
And then whenever death may call,
They'll be prepared to die."

The words and the music were wafted on the air, led by the rich, full voice of the pastor. He walked with his head bared, as if he felt the majesty of God in death.

The procession entered the graveyard, and wound among the tombs. It was a quiet spot, sheltered in the edge of the forest. Decay was settling upon it, for some trees with a too luxuriant growth, rested their weighty limbs upon the marble slabs, while in other places the intruding vegetation had forced away the wooden railings of some secluded grave spots, where memory had quietly laid to rest some dear loved form.

Yet, if ever a spirit of subdued and pleasing melancholy pervaded the mind at such a time, it was here—for though the old grandmother bent over the grave, as if she wished once more to see her darling child—she, with her own withered hand, sprinkled the first soft clod over the white coffin as the pastor said, "dust to dust;" and as he added, "the spirit to the God who gave," she raised her eyes beaming with trust and confidence to heaven.

These scenes and associations made a strong impression on the mind of Miranda. She felt alone—for Eliza, her best beloved companion, had passed away entirely from earth; and it was only in the bright heavens she could ever think of her again.

"The sun shines, but it does not look bright. The birds sing, but they do not seem happy. The waters look blue, but the waves move along as if they were not glad."

Thus Miranda thought as she sat on the bench in the piazza, with her back towards Mrs. Carter's, and her face towards the sea. Her mind was pondering upon the change in everything.

She had been chasing butterflies from flower to flower, and

the sport had not afforded her its usual pleasure. Her mind was wearied with its loneliness. The little girl was sad.

The first shadow from the eternal world had fallen upon her, and she brooded in secret on the strange mystery of death. "What is death?" said her mind to her soul; and her soul answered, "It is the finger of God."

"Why is it?" said the mind. "Because of sin," said the soul; and meditation, that sweet and prompt attendant on reason, said, "Yes, mother read to me from the Bible, 'the soul that sinneth, it shall die.'"

Just then, Mr. Elliot walked out into the piazza, and found Miranda quietly seated on the bench. Her eyes were still directed towards the sea, with a deeply thoughtful expression.

The flat curls of her infancy that clustered around her head were drooping now on each side of her fair, open brow, reaching almost to the snowy linen of her apron, which buttoned around her small white throat. One small hand clasped a bunch of purple thistle-down, which she had secured in her chase after a butterfly. Whether she was conscious or not of its possession, I do not know, but she held it almost nervously between her fingers and thumb.

"A penny for your thoughts, my daughter," said Mr. Elliot, as he advanced to her, and laid his hand upon her head.

"I was thinking of *death*, father." And she looked up to him with the confidence of truth, and the earnestness of an inquiring mind.

"Well, what do you think of death?"

"Father: Is death the finger of God?"

"Yes, it is the finger of God, laid in wrath upon man."

"Was that the reason Eliza Carter died? Was God angry with her?" asked the child, tremulous with anxiety.

"I hope not, my dear; but she suffered for the sin of our first parents."

"Oh father! how can that be?"

"Very well; but perhaps you would not understand it if

I were to tell you now. Had you not better trust your Heavenly Father, and wait until your mind gets stronger and older?"

"Tell me now, father—if you please, sir."

"Well, then, I will try to explain it to you, and you must listen. When Adam sinned, it was with his spirit. That spirit which God had given him, rose up in opposition and said, '*I will not obey God.*' Was this not a great sin?"

"Yes, sir."

"Well, we cannot see the spirit of man—we only see his body; and can only understand the laws of his body, but *God sees him throughout* (O! the searching eye of God!). He saw that man would be utterly lost and ruined, if he did not save him. Can my daughter understand?"

"Yes, sir."

"What did God do to save man?"

"He sent his Son into the world to die for sinners."

"Was it to save his body or his soul from death?"

"To save his soul."

"Yes; and now remember what I say. To save the soul from eternal death, God redeemed the body from sin through faith in Jesus Christ; but as the body itself is perishable and earthly, it pays the penalty of death to those laws of God, which we can see and understand with our natural minds."

Did Miranda understand or not? Perhaps not; and yet it was best to gratify the earnest pleadings of an infant mind. The shadow that had fallen on her young spirit was now lit up with one ray of divine light, which might brighten and brighten unto the perfect day, when all clouds would be lost in the sunshine of God's presence.

CHAPTER VIII.

TIME passed on, and the shadows softened, and the touches of light became deeper and deeper—incidents thickened in the life of the child, and they were fixing their indelible marks upon her character and mind.

Mrs. Carter was still alive and alone; but did she not have a comforter? Yes: Miranda, when her afternoon's romp was over, would run in, and taking her seat on the little stool, by the bedside or the chair, read to her from the Bible, until sometimes the shadows of evening deepened into late twilight. The old lady loved, too, to talk to the attentive listener about her children, whom the "good Lord had taken to himself;" and whenever she rose to leave, a soft hand was laid upon her head, and a soft, tremulous voice said, "May God bless you, my child."

But this old lady, with all her trust in God, and quiet resignation to his will, was very superstitious, believing in dreams, and visions, and visitations from the spiritual world. Her afflictions had been all, to her mind, preceded by warnings; and these were narrated to Miranda with the earnestness of a settled belief. Thus, on the child's mind there lingered continually a mysterious fear of something beyond this life.

Unthoughtful of the young and tender mind that ministered to her, she had indiscriminately laid before it the vagaries of her own weak intellect, made weaker by indulgence in this ideal world of thought, and altogether untutored to the art of training. May it not be possible, that the tender Eliza—whose physical powers were weak, and whose mental powers were active—had been forced, as it were, into another state of existence, by such unnatural food?

That childlike faith which robbed the old lady's mind of all fear, was beautifully exhibited in the mind of Eliza; and early linked every thought and hope with heaven.

But Miranda's mind had been born of intellect, and nursed in the atmosphere of thought, so that her reason claimed a deeper research than theirs into the region of the unseen.

"Good-night, Mrs. Carter," Miranda said, one night, in her usual tone. The old lady took her hand in one of hers, and resting the other on her hand, said, "May God bless you, my child, and make you an angel in his presence."

When Miranda went out into the street, she found it much later than she expected; and though there was but the length of the garden dividing the houses, the distance now seemed doubly long to the fearful child. It was very dark, and there was no moonlight to dispel brooding spirits of gloom and fear. Besides this, Miranda heard and saw things she did not understand. Opening at the side of the house, under the basement, was a door, the entrance to a long cellar, where they secured wood from the weather, and put away oysters as they were brought up in the shell from the river.

The shutting of this cellar door, and the rushing of feet, had an unearthly sound to her startled senses, as she passed near the paling that divided her from it.

Who can tell the indescribable sensation that rushes over a child's mind under such circumstances, but those who can remember them in the early history of their own experience? The thrill—the all-pervading emotion—the shrinking away to a mere point of our physical strength—feeling that we are the focus of every unknown influence—powerless in the grasp of the Infinite!

Poor Miranda—a perfect mite in creation—trembled with fear, and what a world of thought passed before her mind! All Mrs. Carter had ever told her about dreams and visions, was distinctly remembered; and she remembered also that the negroes had many mysterious tales connected with these premises.

"My *gracious*, uncle Isaac, I ain't gwine in dat place by *myself* 'gen, I tell you."

"Wat's de matter wid you now, fool," said an old man, who was going towards the cellar with a basket of oysters.

"You go in dere, an' I boun' you will know soon. I sartin you meet one groan right *at de door*, I tell you!"

"You *tell me indeed?*—but I don't b'lieve you anyhow."

Miranda was relieved by the voices of the servants, and stepped more lightly into the piazza; but still the groan—"where did *that* come from?"

The comfortable home-look that greeted her, as she entered the door, banished all ghosts and hobgoblins from Miranda's mind. The cheerful voices of her parents, and their kind inquiries after her old friend, linked her again with the natural world. And it was a relief to her to feel once more that she was not alone, but surrounded by others possessing the same feelings, and accountable to the same God. These thoughts were not distinctly marked out in Miranda's mind; but they were evident by the whole soul feeling that she manifested, as she seemed to give herself up to the enjoyment of social intercourse. She embraced her mother—greeted her father; and laid her head upon her aunt's fair neck, as if she thought "here is my refuge, here is my home!"

Besides this, she was exactly in the room which always seemed more like home to her than anywhere else; in the room with the antique carpet, rich to her in historic lore. It had told her of love and of pride, of maternal solicitude and desperate passion. For here were animals with their young, and there animals in pursuit of their prey. *Here*, peacocks, with their spreading tails, and there doves, with tender love, brooding over their nests of young. *Here* was the young fawn, nipping the tenderest herbage, and there the antlered buck, bounding away from the pursuing hound.

Here she felt at home, with these silent companions of her thoughts and imaginings, and with those whom she loved; and she felt also the sweet influence of being beloved.

The superstition that for a time had overpowered her, slunk

away, like a dark spirit that feared the light, into some remote corner of her mind, not dispossessed, but slumbering.

They gathered around the tea-table—Mr. and Mrs. Elliot, Anna Young, and Miranda. A spirit of refinement presided over everything. The mahogany was dark and shining, the china white and glittering in the bright lights, and they, too, with care were shielded from the evening breeze by clear, glass shades. All was elegant comfort and neatness, without display.

But the hearts—the hearts! Look in, if you can, and see the limpid fountains. Two blend in one, and how clear its depths! Down—down, until the vision is lost in the crystal light, where lie the loved remains of the past, the treasures of by-gone times, and even the wrecks of memory, all consecrated by reflection from above, and pass not the sparkling fountains that bubble up near by.

Joyous and glad, they spring from the earth into the region of light; rejoicing in the sunshine, they pass on quickly, the crystals from beneath reflecting from above, and mingling their light with the light of heaven. Pass on, joyous and glad still, ye fountains of life! Reflect and refract still, from above and beneath, the light of truth and the light of heaven. Mirror still in your clear depths the eye of man, that he may ponder—that he may learn!

"I *can't*, Uncle Isaac—I *can't*, you, sir, I *can't* go in de place in de dark night, by myse."

"You *shall go in*, sir. Nobody *but you* shall see dat groan you talk about." These words came up distinctly from the yard below.

"What in the world can be the matter?" said Mr. Elliot.

"Only some of Toby's foolish fears, I suppose," said Mrs. Elliot; "he is proverbially a great coward."

But now vociferous voices and expostulations were heard, as Uncle Isaac, in the earnestness of his purpose, seemed to force him into the dark cellar.

"That fellow may do Toby some harm, by his perseverance," said Mr. Elliot, rising from table, and going to one of the windows that opened above the scene of action.

There stood Uncle Isaac beneath, his bald head glistening in the reflection of a torch-light, which he held above him, so that only a few indistinct rays could penetrate into the "dark obscure" beyond. Poor Toby, trembling with apprehension, stood on the floor of the cellar. One leg was advanced towards the mysterious region of terror, but, as if to balance the courage of that leg, the opposite arm was striving to reach the door-post, and would have done it but for Uncle Isaac's powerful grasp upon his shoulder. His eyes and mouth, both wide open, pictured the horrors of his imagination; and he gasped forth, by snatches—

"Uncle Isaac—I tell you, sir—I see um," and the hand evidently came nearer the door; but Uncle Isaac said—

"You *shan't* come out, sir, tell you see *what it is*."

"O, Uncle Isaac—I yeddy um da groan an sife," and here the poor fellow gave forth a puff of agonized air: "O, Uncle Isaac—I yeddy um—I yeddy um movin'!"

Anna Young and Miranda had been attracted to Mr. Elliot's side, and were now witnessing the scene. No one knew with what intense interest Miranda looked upon it, or with what terror she clung to the window-frame, as she thought to herself, "that groan, where can it come from?"

"O! *id a comin—id a comin*," was shrieked from below, and the next moment out rushed two dark bodies,—Toby, falling down upon the flat paving-stones of the entrance, and a little, red calf, bounding over him, in joy at being liberated from its temporary prison.

Poor Miranda screamed at the "denouement" of the scene, and, without comprehending it, hid her head on her father's arm, while he was shaking with laughter at the ludicrous farce.

"Well, Isaac, you gave Toby a hard lesson that time ;" but Uncle Isaac was too much excited himself to hear.

"Look, Miranda ! Look at the little calf, that is as glad to get out of the cellar as Toby. Did you know, before, that a little calf could groan and sigh ?"

"Was it the calf, father, that groaned ?"

"Certainly it was," said Mr. Elliot ; and Miranda raised her head, and met her mother's eyes, looking with anxious solicitude on her countenance.

There she read fear, dispelled for a moment by confidence ; but she felt that a new feature in character was opened to her investigation.

Toby went off with his head down ; but saying, audibly enough to be heard,—

"I tell you, da calf groan *hard* for true. I tink it bin somebody in torment, *sure enuff*."

Isaac laughed as he laid the torch on the ground, and smothered it with his foot. He turned to close the cellar-door, and discovered his master above him, at the open window.

"Well, Isaac, you have given Toby a hard lesson."

"Yes, sir, I meant it to be a hard lesson, master," said the old man, touching his forelock in default of a hat, and bowing respectfully.

"Why ?—Did you consider it necessary ?"

"O yes, sir ; that boy is a great fool, master. His own shadow in the moonlight will scare him, sir ; and if he only hears a bat fly by him at night, you never heard such a noise as he will make, sir ; run, and throw himself down in the kitchen, and say, 'a sperit-bird is comin after him.' Everything, sir, is 'sperit—sperit.'"

"Has he always been so great a coward ?" said Mr. Elliot.

"He always was a sort o' scary child, sir ; but some of the people, to carry out their own fun, told him some story about Uncle ^{Tom} living in the dungeon under the carriage-house, him into the ^{quarry} in a great deal worse than ever."

Miranda involuntarily shuddered as she stood by her mother, who had approached, and put her arm around her, as she stood near the window, by her father. She felt secure outwardly, but the mind was alive, and restless. It was struggling in a coil that had been drawn gradually around it; and how true it is, that the mind, to be independent, must be entirely free from fear!

"What story is this about the dungeon?" said Mr. Elliot.

"Why, they have got a story here, sir," said the old man, "that the old gentleman that left this house to my mistress was very cruel, and that he kept one of his servants in the dungeon till he died."

"Who did they hear all this from?"

"Well, I don't know, sir. I b'leve one of them said he seed the bones with his own eyes, and that was the best proof; but some niggers are great fools, master."

"Very well, we will have an examination to-morrow; perhaps it may turn out to be another calf."

A dark dungeon, and bones! How these ideas revelled in Miranda's excited imagination; and as she leaned her head on her mother's shoulder, it throbbed with the new excitement of Uncle Isaac's story.

"Come, Miranda," said Mrs. Elliot, who had drawn a chair, and seated herself near the window, keeping her arm still around her daughter's waist.

"Come, I must tell you about this old gentleman they are talking so freely about, or you will suppose him to be some great bugbear of an ancestor, ready to jump at us from every corner of the premises."

Still her head reclined upon that secure and loving place, till Mr. Elliot put his head down and made a sudden noise in her ear. She raised her head quickly, startled by the unexpected noise; but there she met the laughing eyes, and the lips of her father, who still held his head down, and kissed her with affection, saying,

"Is my little daughter afraid of shadows?"

"Or of calves?" said Anna Young, kneeling now by Miranda. "Little Tulip looked wonderfully *unlike a calf*, as she rushed out over poor Toby. What did you think it was, Miranda? Did you think it a lion, or an elephant?"

"I thought, Aunt Anna," said Miranda, holding out her arms to their utmost extent, and then laying them gently around Anna's neck, "that it was a great unknown."

Her countenance gradually became brighter, as she saw that the darkness had given place to a moonlight. This was reflected from a gibbous moon, now risen partially above the horizon. The scene looked soft and dewy, and the silent ministrations of air were already at work, to moisten the green grass and the bending verdure, and to cast over all the works of man the semblance of a gentle rain.

The little calf was feeding on the soft, green herbage of the yard, innocently unconscious of the important part it had been acting. Its appetite, sharpened by its long confinement with wood and oysters, was now luxuriating in a luscious meal. Dainty food, and contented little piece of animated nature! No condiments, no accessories of any kind, were necessary to make it hold its head down, and every now and then frisk its tail, in the full enjoyment of breaking its abstinence.

Miranda looked at it attentively, as it moved on through the green grass, its foot-sound falling as gently on the ground as the flapping of a bird's wing through the silent air.

They all seemed to be contemplating Miranda, as she watched the tiny thing in its silent movements, not holding up its head one instant from the grateful food.

"Why, Aunt Anna," said Miranda, "if I didn't know it was little Tulip *now*, I could almost think it was anything else. See its back—how round it is! and the little tail shaking at us, every now and then, as if it was saying, '*take care*;' besides, the high grass almost hides the head and feet,

and I think it looks very funny. Maybe it *isn't* a calf, after all."

But just as if to suit the occasion, little Tulip heard a well-known signal at the fence, that caused her to hold up her head, and dart up with great animation across the yard.

Miranda clapped her hands, and jumped, saying,

"O, *it is a calf*—it is *little Tulip*—just look at the *dear* little creature!"

"Is not it astonishing that she could *groan* so hard?" said Mr. Elliot.

"O, I suppose, papa," said Miranda, "that was only Toby's fancy."

"Ah, my dear, I am glad that you have arrived at the proper conclusion; that is just the point on which to rest all such fears."

"But the dungeon and the bones!" said Miranda, and her countenance and voice both fell a degree or two.

"That will be explained to your satisfaction, I have no doubt. Believe me, my daughter, there is nothing in the world worse than our own hearts."

"Well, papa, why are we so easily scared?"

"Because we do not trust God. We want to help ourselves; but when we feel our littleness in the midst of the great creation, we shrink within ourselves, and feel terrified."

"O yes, that must be true," said the little girl, eagerly; "I felt just so to-night."

Her mother embraced and kissed her, and looked with loving and grateful eyes upon her husband, who had, with such simple words, restored confidence to the child's mind.

"You have forgotten all about the old gentleman, Miranda," said Mrs. Elliot; "but some other time will do better to hear of him."

"O, *please*, mamma, tell me to-night. Just *begin* it, won't you?"

"O, no, not to-night. Indeed, you see," said her mother,

pointing to the time-piece, "that eight o'clock is just about summoning you to bed."

Anna went off with Miranda; but ere half an hour had elapsed, she was again seated near the window, with her sister and brother.

The moon had now advanced some distance above the horizon, and the slanting rays were thrown far across the room. A single wax-candle still burned within the clear glass-shade.

The moonlight was softened and subdued by a hazy atmosphere, which was finding its way industriously to the earth, in a heavy dew. Drip—drip—drip, was heard from the eaves of the houses; the stems, and leaves of the trees looked as if they were set with brilliants, turning about, from side to side, as if to meet the moonbeams and the eye; the grass itself seemed set with gems, both flickering and radiant; and all was seen through a misty veil, which floated in vapoury folds, and half-concealed, to make more bewitching the beauties of the scene. Near was heard the rippling wave, and far off the continual moan of the Atlantic billows.

These soothing associations were felt, but not expressed. They were those who often entered into the gay world, enjoying its busy, bustling scenes, its varieties and its pleasures; but whenever they returned here, it was like entering into a sanctuary of thought and consecrated feeling, wherein were produced no jarring echoes, but where dwelt the spirit of peace, ever ready to fill, even to overflowing, the intuitive mind.

Miranda was the subject of conversation; and when Anna told them of the influence Mrs. Carter's feelings had gained over the child's mind, Mrs. Elliot said,

"Well, I feel relieved to know the *cause* of the terror she has exhibited to-night. I was afraid that it was some innate weakness of mind, manifesting itself in powerful symptoms. I never saw more complete abandonment than there was in her expression of countenance; never more terror than in the

shivering of her whole frame, when Isaac spoke of the dungeon and the bones."

"I think," said Mr. Elliot, "a certain degree of fear is innate in every mind. If it does not exhibit itself in fear of man, it does in fear of the spiritual, which is called superstition. Now, no one could accuse Mrs. Carter of a fear of man, after going through scenes in our Revolution that have 'tried men's souls,' yet we see that the weak point exhibits itself in her continually appealing to the spiritual."

"But, brother," said Anna, "Mrs. Carter is not afraid even of the spiritual. She talks with perfect composure of seeing substantial shadows (or what she calls ghosts) and spiritual visions while awake."

"This may be so *now*," said Mr. Elliot, "because she has true faith and trust in God, and after losing all, she is herself nearly touching the spiritual world; but you may be sure it commenced in fear, and awe, and terror; in many a shivering of the frame; in many a quivering of the heart, uncontrolled and unwatched by maternal influence."

"The influence on a mind thus terrified in childhood must be very strong," said Mrs. Elliot, "and is fearful in thought."

"Yes, indeed," replied her husband; "it weaves itself into every feeling of the mind and soul. Reverence for Deity,—which is the highest emotion of the soul,—is made subservient to these fancied intimations from a spiritual world; and as to reason, it is laid aside, uncultivated and unregarded."

"And that is the cause, I suppose, of this wanton and unnatural exercise of the imagination. Is it not, brother?"

"*Surely*," said Mr. Elliot, "to maintain the proper balance between the spiritual and the physical; in other words, between the emotions and the passions, the reason must be proportionally exercised."

"If what you say," said Mrs. Elliot, "is strictly in keeping with the construction of mind, I am very sure it accounts

satisfactorily for the prevalence of this weakness among the ignorant."

"I have thought much of this subject," said Mr. Elliot, "and can come to no other conclusion about it than this, that the highest intellectual faculties are the legitimate links between the spiritual and the sensual. It is the combining essence of the three in one, which we feel within us. It humanizes the spiritual; it spiritualizes the human. It lays upon them both the finger of thought, and appropriates for use the teachings of the Eternal Mind."

CHAPTER IX.

THE entrance into the dungeon opened into the garden, behind a range of buildings, painted a dark amber colour. A bathing-house, carriage-house, and stable were all comprised under the same roof—the front of the two last opening on the house lot; the bathing-house opening on the garden. Around this opening, which was ruinous from disuse, grew luxuriant weeds, freely intermixed with more civilized plants, such as the euphorbia, with its party-coloured leaves, the prince's feather, with its crimson tufts, and the sodom apple, with its deep orange-coloured balls. The convolvulus and the cypress vines threw their graceful tendrils lovingly around each protruding branch. Flowers clustered thickly on these vines, and the dew was still lingering in glistening drops, as if to make the last hours of their brief existence appear most bright and beautiful.

Helen Rose was added to the family circle that morning. They collected in the garden, around this interesting spot, Mr. Elliot calling several of the servants to attend them.

The sun shone full upon the entrance, and his rays were

fast drinking up the moisture from the soft and delicate petals—the premonition of their decay and death—and the harbinger of other brilliant offerings of nature.

Uncle Isaac pulled away the bushy weeds which grew in every crevice of the stone steps, and, taking a sign from his master, called Toby to go in. But where was Toby? In one moment he had disappeared. Jack went off to hunt him, and soon returned, leading him out of the cellar, which had been the region of terror the night before.

“I suppose, sir, you want to play calf *yourself*,” said the old man. “Well, you needn’t to *try*—you one big calf already! Now, go in, sir, and bring out all you see in *dere*.”

Toby, on his hands and knees, crawled in—at first very much terrified; but the early rays of the sun glanced in, as if glad to light the long-neglected spot, so that he proceeded with more confidence than they expected.

“Bring them things you got there,” said Isaac, who was stooping down and looking in himself; and he took from him what looked to be a skull and other bones of the human frame. They were laid down among the vines and flowers, presenting a striking contrast of life and death. It was indeed a close companionship of the beautiful real and the horrible ideal. But we will proceed—

Toby returns, trembling, with a whole carcass! Is it a monkey? or is it a man? Is it a dog? or is it a calf? It is all the same to Toby. He comes out trembling, dragging the bones after him. The negroes look on with distended eyes; and Miranda looks around upon the sun-bright, cloudless day, as if it were a friend, and would reveal the truth.

“Now,” said Mr. Elliot, “we will have an examination. This thing, that looks so much like a skull, we will examine first,” taking it up in his hands. “This certainly looks something like a head; but the animal propensities sadly predominate. Cautiousness and acquisitiveness uncommonly large.”

A smothered laugh was heard among the girls; and turning around he saw Helen convulsed with laughter.

"What is the matter, Miss Helen?" said he. "Are you laughing at my phrenological lecture?"

"O, no, sir," she answered; "I am only laughing at your subject."

"My scientific exposition is at an end then, I see," said Mr. Elliot. "I am sorry for it; as I intended to try and show that this skull belonged to some one who was confined for murder or some other horrible offence: As it is, I must pronounce that this exterior covered a soft white pulp, worthy only of propagating vegetable seeds, and not the seeds of intellect. For the sport of some mischief-maker, this article was manufactured into a *gourd-head*." He turned it all around, then handed it to Miranda to examine.

It really was a gourd, very much in the shape of a head, with eyes, and nose, and mouth, cut in one side, and had, no doubt, been used to frighten some one. Perhaps, indeed, it may have been made with the express intention of deluding, at a distance, those who looked down into the dim dungeon. Its exclusion from the atmosphere had also given it that pale appearance of bone in a state of partial decay.

"Now we will pursue the examination of these bones," said Mr. Elliot. "Here is a thigh-bone, which, in a dungeon, might be taken for a man's; but he must have walked on his all fours, if it was attached to this back-bone. What do you think of it, Jack?" And Mr. Elliot put them together, so that the original connexion might be seen.

"Old horse bone, master," raising his cap from his bald head, and smiling very significantly.

"Now, bring up that carcass that lies there amid the weeds," said Mr. Elliot. "Come, Toby, you must complete your heroism by performing that act. Down, sir!" he said, sternly, on seeing him hesitate.

When the carcass was brought up and laid on the ground before him, he continued his comments—

“A four-footed animal—horizontal spine, terminating in a long tail—head, decidedly carnivorous. This I pronounce to be an animal of the canine species—faithful to his owners while alive, by being a good watch-dog; and faithful also to his own nature, by taking down into this den of his own selection, old bones for his especial picking. Cannot *you* guess, Miranda, what dog this is? Look and see if you can recognise nothing about him.”

Miranda knelt down by him, disgusting to her feelings as it was.

The bones were all bare, as if years had passed since he laid them down in that dark and impenetrable corner, a tribute to the earth from which he sprung.

“How can I tell, dear father, what dog it is by the bones?” said Miranda, looking up to her father, who stood near her.

“Examine it well, my daughter—just as if you were looking for an old acquaintance.”

“An old acquaintance among bones! Why, papa, you make me *shudder*; and I can tell you, if I do find one, I won't shake hands;” and she bent again over the bones with an earnest gaze.

“Ah, now I see an old rusty chain. Look, Helen—it is the very chain that you and I fastened with a piece of wire, around old Jason's neck.”

“Ah, well, then it must be Jason himself,” said Mr. Elliot.

“Sure enough, papa,” said Miranda. “Poor old Jason went off by himself, and died in that dark old dungeon. When we were all wondering where he had gone to, or who had taken him off, he was suffering and dying there all by himself!” and her voice trembled, for she was a child of a sympathetic and tender nature.

“Well, my dear, are you satisfied now about the dungeon and the bones?”

"O yes, papa—more than satisfied. I shall never look here without thinking of poor old Jason; and I shall always feel as if I had a gourd-head on."

A burst of merriment answered the precocious child, whose intellect expanded so promptly to every awakening influence. Like the flower buds around, which needed but light and heat to open their petals to the morrow's sun, so her mind was lying, folded but still intelligent—inert, only to awaken in strength—precious as a dew-drop distilled from above, to fertilize and purify the earthly part of her threefold being.

"O no," said her father, "I protest against your spurning a gourd-head even in imagination: But I will tell you what we will do with this gourd-head, with its mimic eyes, nose, and mouth. We will mount it on the top of a stick here, as a terror for awhile of all foolish believers in ghosts and hob goblins. Here, Isaac, I leave that part of the work to you."

"I am very much obliged to you, Mr. Elliot," said Helen Rose, "for having this important examination before school for my benefit. It has been a rich treat, I assure you: and above all, I shall not forget your *scientific researches*. If I ever want my head examined, I shall certainly apply to you. Ah! there's that wide-mouthed monster calling me to school—so farewell."

CHAPTER X.

WEEKS, nay months had passed away since the foregoing scenes had been enacted: and Mrs. Elliot had not yet fulfilled her promise of telling that story of the old gentleman who had left her that house.

She had reserved it as a reward for effort against fear, for if there was anything Miranda preferred above all others, it was hearing a good story; and this that would come from her

mother's lips, she knew would be so strictly true, that she looked forward to hearing it, with the utmost interest.

Her mother had said to her, "My daughter, it will not be right for you to do 'evil that good may come.' You must not neglect Mrs. Carter; and neither will it do to shock her feelings by opposing her. You will then have to practise *self-control*. You may do this in two ways: First, by speaking freely to your parents and aunt, that they may enlighten your mind; and again, by allowing your thoughts to dwell on God, who not only makes all things, but who preserves and watches over us, day by day, and hour by hour. You have seen the fallacy of some of your fears—now, will you promise me to try and struggle against them, until you overcome them entirely?"

"Yes, dear mamma, indeed I will try; and I think it will not be a difficult matter now. Whenever I feel afraid, I will think of the gourd-head, and that will make me laugh; and if it does not, I will make Toby light up its horrible face some dark night, and walk right up to it by myself."

"Very well—that will be an excellent way of fortifying your mind against being overcome. *Action in effort, confirms an intention always.*"

"When will you tell me that story about the old gentleman, mamma? I am so anxious to hear of him; and I have waited now a long time."

"Very well—I will tell you when I see that you have fortified your mind against these surprises, which would, my child, if indulged in, make you a miserable woman."

In course of time, they were all seated in our menagerie room—that is, where the antique carpet was; but no one felt disposed to study Natural History this evening.

The animals, either grouped or alone, exactly as when we first described them, from the snow-white bear of the polar region to the little house rat that peeps from its hole by the parlour fireside, only blended in now with the scene, giving to

it a unique appearance. They were all as bright as ever, though, under the subduing influence of candle-light; but their shining eyes and graceful positions were lost now, even to the usually admiring eyes of Miranda.

Mrs. Elliot sat near the window, which was down, as the evening breeze had in it a sharp touch of autumn; and around her were gathered Anna Young, Helen Rose, and Miranda.

My mother, (began Mrs. Elliot), was a Hanoverian; and the only child of a widow lady.

They had experienced great reverses of fortune, which, my mother said, she had a faint remembrance of in early life; but the first distinct impression on her mind, was of a large house, magnificently furnished, and everything she could desire, so bountifully provided, as to leave no room for her to express a wish.

An old gentleman, with a noble sun-burnt brow, was the almoner of all this bounty. My mother's uncle had returned from the Indies, where he had gone in early life to seek his fortunes; and finding his sister in the greatest distress, applied the fortune he had made to her relief. He took her to his heart and to his home, adopting my mother as his own child, and providing for her munificently. But I will not linger longer than necessary, on any part of my story.

My mother grew up in this rich and fertile soil—one in which she experienced every advantage. The practical and ornamental branches of education, the useful, the showy, and the entertaining accomplishments, were all received by her into a prompt and ready mind.

Accomplished and beautiful, she created quite a sensation in the society of Bremen, the city in which we resided; and while mingling in the gay parties of her first season out, made a deep impression on the heart of a young American stranger. This interest was decidedly mutual; but the language of the eyes was the only one that had expressed it, when they were separated, seemingly for ever, by most untoward events.

A revolutionary movement distracted that country ; and in it our uncle was deeply interested on the most liberal side. He struggled like an old soldier in the cause ; and his purse was freely opened to relieve the suffering.

The foreign aids secured by the government, came into the country, burning and plundering in their course, consuming the resources of the inhabitants, and producing the greatest distress.

My mother and grandmother had been removed from Bremen into a secluded little valley on the river Oste, where it was supposed they would be safe ; but the providence of God, or what some would call, the finger of destiny, was pointing another way.

Our uncle had arrived on a temporary visit to their place of seclusion. Everything looked smiling and peaceful, as the setting sun gilded the western heavens with his purple and golden hues. They spoke of peace and a happy reunion in Bremen ; and even my mother, Christiana Carle, was soothed with the thought, that perhaps the interesting American would return there also.

Sad was their awakening however that night, for flames and destruction aroused them from their midnight slumbers ; but over this scene I must hasten, as my mother always did—saying, that to her it was the beginning of so much sorrow, that she could never dwell upon it without the greatest pain.

She was borne from the midst of surrounding death by a powerful arm ; but whose, she did not then know. When conscious of relief from danger she found herself with her uncle, whom she always called father, in a secluded spot, hid behind one of the precipitous hills of the valley.

They could see the lurid glare of the devouring element reflected far above them, while the deep shadow that surrounded them, seemed darker from the contrast.

The smoke went up in huge volumes, and settling in clouds, mingled with a red and burning light, seemed like the concen-

trated vengeance of human passion ready to be poured back upon the earth in showers of fiery wrath; while on the still air, the crackling of the flames—the crushing in of fallen timbers, and then again, the eager contention of men exulting in the work of death, like the quick rushing agents of terror and dismay.

My mother waited with intense anxiety for the appearance of her mother, who, her father said, their deliverer had gone back to try and save.

But alas! she was never more beheld by them. The wing of the building that she was in, fell through with a terrible crash before she could be rescued.

Their preserver soon made his appearance, and after the awful disclosure, took my mother up, even while she was in an agony of grief, and placed her on horseback, saying as he did so, "You must go now, or meet a worse fate."

Another horse was provided for the old gentleman, who mounted; and thus in a few short hours, stripped of all comfort and happiness both of mind and body, they were stealthily threading the mountain paths, and the shadiest roads through the valleys, with a perfect stranger as their sole friend and guardian in the world.

He proved to be a Holsteiner, who, being engaged in some mercantile transaction in Hanover at this time, seemed sent by Providence to save them from certain destruction. Not being very far from Hamburg, he took them by hasty marches to that place, from whence, as soon as they could make their arrangements, they sailed to America together.

Wonderful are the changes connected with the history of man. Unexpectedly to this stranger, and guided by a wayward destiny, so far as it was connected with his own designs, he arranged his business as soon as possible, and sailed with them for this place.

"For this place direct, sister?" said Anna Young.

"Yes, for this place *direct*—as strange as it may appear,

ships of the line have anchored at our wharves in former times, importing direct from Europe here."

"It certainly seems very strange now; but go on."

Frederick Molock was a man of peculiar manners, peculiar disposition; and I may truly add, a most peculiar appearance.

Being very tall, he appeared not above mediocrity, from a remarkable bend in his shoulders, which seemed to be formed from a natural derangement of parts. The joints of the shoulders were both thrown forward, as if in advance of the rest of the body; and his arms hung down at his sides, as if meant for the suspension of weights. His head was sunk between these shoulders; and when he looked up, it was with an effort, that showed itself particularly in an elevation of the brow, forming semicircular lines around the eye, like the rippling surface of still waters, when a stone is thrown into their quiet depths.

But his eyes were the living principle embedded in clay. It lit up every imperfection, with speaking and unnatural light—it glossed over every defect—it seemed not only to exercise, but demand an influence over every object of its desire.

Over our uncle they proved like the eyes of a basilisk, charming him away at pleasure so often from his original intentions and opinion, that, at last, he seemed to yield himself up, a willing and unconscious captive.

One reason of this was, because in their deep, ardent, soft, and beaming light, there was an ever abiding expression of a firm and unbending will, blended with a depth of feeling, which displayed itself only to those for whom he cared most. Another was, that in leaving his native country, to accompany them to this, a voluntary exile, our uncle thought he had performed an act of devotion, which claimed all the gratitude of their nature: and added to his rescue and protection of them, secured the whole management of their concerns. The fund they secured from their property in Hanover, was en-

tirely through his influence, so that to his care it was very naturally consigned.

The vessel stopped a few days at Madeira: and there they rode about in the country around, enjoying the view from the vine-clad hills.

One day, the last they were to remain there—they went out in an open curricule, to enjoy this pleasure, our uncle said, for the last time together.

My mother did not consider it a pleasure. Molock's eyes looked down into hers, as he sat in front of her: but there they met no answering emotion. He commented upon everything interesting, in connexion with the time and place; but her ears listened not, her heart responded not.

Two horsemen pass them, and her face lights up with animation.

Poor Molock thought that he had caused the rosy tint; and he looked down still deeper into her eyes, which now expressed real emotion from embarrassment.

The horsemen return quickly, and in an unlucky moment the curricule upsets. One of them dismounted, and raising my mother from the ground, removed her among the vines that clustered on the wayside.

She opened her eyes, and beheld the stranger who had occupied all her thoughts for so long a time.

But I must hasten on. They were again separated suddenly and entirely. She, overcome by the fright and the astonishment of this meeting, fainted; and when she recovered, her uncle and Molock were near her.

For days she was delirious—for weeks convalescent, so that the vessel had reached her destination long before she was well enough to be removed.

The stranger appeared not, and his momentary glance into her heart of hearts, seemed to have been nought but a vision of beauty—a ray of sunshine, that had penetrated there, but to show her its desolation. With the wild waves surrounding

her, and the "wide wide world" beyond, there was left no beacon to turn her weary languishing eyes upon—no hope whereon to rest her longing heart.

In the mean time her uncle was ever kind—Molock ever assiduous in his attentions. His heart, which seemed ever tender and loving, spoke through those meaning eyes with the same language of devotion; but her heart responded not—her eyes looked either coldly out upon the blue waves, or gave a vacant gaze upon objects around her. They tried every pleasing art to rouse her from this half conscious state, which, they were afraid, proceeded from some injury of the brain, received in her fall from the curricule.

To all their inquiries of what they could do for her, she answered, "the sea, the sea."

"Why are you so anxious to go to sea?" said her uncle.

"Because it looks free. It is the world-wide link that binds man together, and as we are turned adrift from our dear native land, let us hasten to find some quiet home to dwell in."

"I may look for one to die in, Christiana," said her uncle with emotion; "but, my daughter, it is very different with you—you will find one to live in. Life will yet surround you with a garden of flowers. My flowers are faded and gone, all except this little one, that droops its head now, for want of the salt-sea waves,—so to sea we will go."

They landed on this shore, strangers in a strange land; but not being dependent on the bounty of strangers, they soon established a respectable standing among the very first inhabitants.

A new importing house was soon in operation, with Christian Carle, our uncle's name, at the head of it, although every one knew that Molock was the influential head.

Time passed on. The sea had brought to my mother's vision no well remembered stranger's face a second time. "Hope deferred" sunk like a leaden weight upon her heart.

Yielding to her uncle's earnest wishes, she engaged herself

to Molock ; but reserving to herself entire control of the time of consummation.

Here, when all others seemed happy, and nature wooed her with her sweetest smiles, she lingered with a heavy heart and a longing eye, looking still to "the sea, the sea," for relief and freedom from oppressive and miserable thought.

Like a lonely and desolate mariner, tossed about on raging billows, whose only hope is in the refuge of some passing vessel, her eyes are turned ever to the horizon, the outermost verge of thought, hoping that some refuge, unexpected and strange as it might be, would appear, on which her weary spirit might repose.

In the mean time large importations were made, and business prospered in proportion to the prosperous aspect of the place. On the arrival of any of their ships, her uncle made it a point that she should go down with him—often even before she was unladen—wishing her to feel the interest of a proprietress in all he owned. He would describe to her the cargo, and try to interest her also in the process of unlading.

In telling me her life, my mother said to me, "This gave me pleasure ; for while we were at the ship, Molock was obliged to be at the warehouse receiving goods, so that there I lingered often, even when not interested. Besides, it gave me pleasure to feel that, while I was surrounded by water, even in such small quantities, he was on the land. Thus it is, that the heart in distress clings to the smallest things, and hangs its hopes on nothing.

Yet, there was something even soothing to me, in the association of the sea. It had taken away from these shores to my native land, one whose voice still lingered in my ear—one, the expression of whose eyes still dwelt in my heart.

It had carried me to vine-clad hills, where—though real or not—he had appeared before me like a vision of light.

"Why, then, O sea," I said, pressing myself on the side of the vessel next the ocean, in the intensity of my feeling,

"why may you not again bring to me, him whom my soul longeth to look upon?"

One day they were taking out vast quantities of small bricks from the hold of the vessel, and I said to my father, "I wonder they should bring such things as these from such a distance. Why in the world do they not make them here?"

"These are for a very particular purpose, Christiana," said my father. "Molock intends building a house, worthy of his future bride."

I fainted, and was taken home. Another spell of sickness and complete prostration, and another season of anxious watching, was passed through.

(You must remember that I am speaking in my mother's words.) I was, however, relieved from Molock's presence by a great press of business; and, in consequence, enjoyed more of my father's company. In spite of the restraints of my position, there was more of a soothing influence in my heart than I had felt for a long time; and when my father said to me one day, "My dear Christiana, what *can* I do for you to make you better, I replied:

"The sea, the sea, my father, is the only longing I have."

"Why do you wish to go to sea?" he asked a second time, even as he asked me in Madeira: and I answered almost as I did then.

"Because it looks *free*. It is the world-wide link that binds *us* together: dear father, let us go to sea if possible."

"Well, Christiana, you are a strange little body! I am sure I am as near you here, as I would be on the sea: but to sea we will go."

The time came. My father and I were to go to the north, Molock to remain here, as his presence was absolutely necessary.

With what painful emotions I looked upon the foundations

of a large house which my father pointed out to me, as my future abode, as we were going down to the landing!

"What house was that, mamma?" said Miranda.

"This very house," said Mrs. Elliot. "Look at the foundation, and you will see the small Dutch bricks, the hard cement, and the care with which it was constructed."

"O, I do hope Molock wasn't my grandfather!" said Miranda.

"How could he be," said Helen Rose, laughing, "when your mother's name was Young?"

"*Sure enough*," said Miranda. "I beg pardon, mamma, for interrupting you; please go on."

My mother said, continued Mrs. Elliott, It was certainly the greatest effort of my life, to look calmly down into Molock's eyes, as I sat in the carriage, before this house, and he stood by it, telling me of his plans, and his expectations of happiness *with* me.

"Remember, Christiana, while you are away," he said, "that every brick is cemented with a thought of you. Remember that every fibre of the wood, every particle of the iron, every moment of the time devoted to this work, is consecrated to you, as entirely as thought, and mind, and soul belong to God."

With what a shudder I threw myself upon my berth, with this sentence ringing in my ears—"Why is it," I thought in agony of spirit, "am I bound hand and foot, and left to the mercy of this man? This man, of whom I feel that I can know nothing, and who looks upon me with such strange idolatry. Why is it that my nature *must* submit—that my heart *must* be sacrificed, for the happiness of one, whose nature is so foreign to mine—whose heart is so remote from the orbit of my own sensations?"

But the sea, the sea! brought animation once more to my

eye, and peace to my spirit. Hope,—that re-creating power, the divine essence of love on earth,—visited me with its soothing influence, whispering strange delights and seeming impossibilities to my listening ear.

I felt eager delight in changing from place to place—in lingering where we encountered quick transition of visitors, or in passing quickly through out-of-the-way and remote places. How quickly I learned to scan a crowd—feeling that my intuitions, like the eye of the desolate mariner, would see a speck on the horizon, if that speck betokened refuge!

But ungratified were the eyes, and the heart desolate still, as we embarked at New York for the south, intending only to stop a week or two in Richmond, Virginia.

“And you came from Richmond, Virginia, mamma,” said Miranda, nodding her head and looking very wise.

“‘And thereby hangs a tale,’ you may be sure,” whispered Helen to Miranda.

In Richmond we saw everything that was to be seen. The day before our departure had arrived, and we had one sight more to visit—a gallery of paintings.

There we lingered as long as possible. I dwelt with more intense interest than usual, on the exquisite paintings that met my eyes on every side.

The sun was fast sinking in the western sky, when we approached the door, for the purpose of leaving the house. There, we met a gentleman of our acquaintance, with whom my father commented on the merits of the gallery. He said :

“Have you seen the portraits of our great men?”

“No,” said my father. “Where are they?” “In a room by themselves; and if you will permit me, I will accompany you and point them out.”

My mind was on the “*qui vive*” then. It was wide awake :

and I felt that now or never there was to be a crisis in my fate. I turned to the room like a drowning man catching at a straw, thinking to myself, My sun must rise now, or rise no more for ever. I even felt in an expecting mood. When, strange to say, as I entered the room, *his* portrait stood before me. Across the room, in front of the door, it hung; and I walked right up to it, as if I had come to see that and no other. My father and the gentleman followed me, and after that, I was only conscious of hearing this question, "Who is that?" and the answer, "Philip Young, our senator."

"The *very man*, the *very man*," said Miranda, now actually getting up, and capering about in her joy. "Look at my grandfather, Helen! come here, and look at him. There he is!" and in her enthusiasm, she drew Helen from her seat, to look at the portrait over the mantel-piece—one that she had seen every day.

"And that is the very portrait," said Anna Young.

"O how *exciting* this is!" said Miranda; "what strange things happen in this world."

"Yes, stranger than fiction," said Mrs. Elliot, laughing with the rest at the child's astonishment. "But I suppose as you have found your grandfather, you want to hear nothing more about the house."

"O yes, yes," said Miranda; "please tell us more about Molock; but I am too glad he wasn't my grandfather."

She composed herself now, to hear the sequel of her grandmother's story, and listened without further interruption to the end.

The next thing I remember was, that Philip Young was bending over me, and I felt as if my heart had reached its refuge.

"Leave me not," I exclaimed; for I began to think that this image was but the shadow of a brighter image in my heart.

"Never again, never again," he exclaimed, "unless I find that we can be nought to each other. Then, even then, I can never forget Bremen, never forget Madeira."

My mother never dwelt upon the particulars of her life at this period. She merely said, that he arrived at the hotel just as she was taken senseless from the carriage. He aided in her removal, and, to his surprise and delight, found in her the long-lost idol of his affections.

Senator as he was, and one high in the estimation of the world, my father would not listen to his suit, protesting that there was as true a heart awaiting her at home, as any he had to offer; one that had been waiting, watching, and hoping too long already.

"My dear sir," said my father, "I have been watching, waiting, and hoping a longer time than he has. Christiana had not seen *him*, when in Bremen I saw no one but her. To all my inquiries for her, I received but one answer, and that was, that she had perished in a conflagration."

"Yes, sir, she *would* have perished," said my father with energy, "if it had not been for that brave man, who awaits her now—one to whom she ought to feel grateful for ever."

"Gratitude can never be so strong a feeling as love, my dear sir," said Philip Young. "In a heart pre-occupied, it can never take the place of love."

"You seem to be very *certain*," said my father, in a tone of irony, "that *your* image has been long cherished."

"*Words*, only, were necessary to express that love which in my mind amounted to devotion, when we were separated by revolutionary movements. Since hearing of the conflagration, and her supposed death, I have been dead to all personal enjoyment, and only live, while living to further the interests of my country."

"*Well, then, sir*," said my father, with emphasis, "*continue* to live for the good of your country. You can have no *nobler* ambition. My daughter you will never have, unless

my life ceases before her marriage; and that, I intend to secure as soon as I arrive at home."

Fortunately, my mother was not at this interview, which took place on the eve of their departure from Richmond. He told her this long afterwards: and only said to her then, that his suit had been unsuccessful, adding, in oft-remembered words, "Hope on, hope ever: that still is left us. This ring, like the sea, is an emblem of eternity: and even eternity shall not separate us, my love. We love now, and will love for ever—even to the last moment look for me."

I came south, (said my mother,) with a hoping heart, although my father seemed inexorable with regard to my marriage with Molock. I cannot dwell without pain on this part of my story—upon my meeting with Molock—upon my trials in having to receive again his renewed and ardent attentions.

He took me over his house, now completely furnished and waiting for its occupants. He told me that the papering of one room (and that was *this* room, Miranda), was chosen in memory of Madeira—the first place he had seen a rising blush on my cheek, in answer to the silent language of his eyes. Poor man! (my mother added), with what infatuation he dwelt upon that premonition of love! a premonition that had no thought of him, and no connexion with his being.

He took me to the withdrawing-room above, pointing out its rare beauties, and showing me that it was built and ornamented in the taste of my country. The refreshment rooms, the balcony, with its pleasure-inviting aspect. "This," he said, "shall be our paradise, when the quiet evening hours come on."

"O where is my refuge?" I thought, as I looked upon it all. "This thing comes too near. It is almost touching me, but to the last moment I will hope."

I have been speaking to you in the place of my mother: but I will hasten on in the third person.

There was to be a pleasure excursion down to St. Cathe-

rine's Island, where were to be collected all the élite of this place, not then a village, but bidding fair, as is recorded in history, to rival Savannah in importance.

"Is it possible," exclaimed Helen Rose, "that these grass-covered streets ever had such presumption?"

"O yes," continued Mrs. Elliot, "it was certainly so, until they found that the situation of the place, on a mere arm of the sea, together with the situation of the surrounding country, did not warrant such prosperity. But to my story."

A bright and pleasant day it proved, the one for the party to St. Catherine's. The river was gayly dressed with boats, each vying with the other to go a-head. Boat songs were heard sounding and resounding along the waters, till they died away in the distance. The boats themselves became like specks upon the horizon, and then disappeared in the watery view beyond.

There, all became life and animation. Hunting, fishing, boat-racing, walking and dancing on the wide, smooth beach, going in the surf and picking up shells, were the varied amusements of the day. Besides, with regard to lunch, there were no stated rules, so that small parties could be seen around some basket, almost every hour of the day.

Christiana Carle was alone sad of all the crowd. She felt that her cruel destiny was hastening upon her with rapid strides, for her father had informed her that in one week she should be married.

She heard still in her ear, the cheering voice of Philip Young, saying "Hope on, hope ever. Look for me to the last!" and she turned her footsteps towards the ocean.

They had landed at the northern part of the island, so that in walking eastward, she was soon in front of the vast ocean. The bar of St. Catherine's was on her left, over which the waves were rushing with their foaming crests; on her right, the still-extending beach, looking wide and endless; while in front, in boundless majesty, rolled Atlantic waves.

She was alone—for she had walked far beyond all the others. The gentlemen were engaged in boat-racing, and her father and Molock were both deeply interested—indeed, they had gone in one of the boats themselves.

She felt real enjoyment, in the liberty of action, as well as thought, that the absence of their watchful eyes secured her.

She feasted on the rushing sound of the Atlantic billows; she walked down until they touched her delicate feet. The waves looked deeply blue and beautiful to her loving eyes; and still she looked upon them, until they seemed to welcome her with playful smiles. At last, they almost seemed to her to say, "Come to our quiet depths: here is a refuge among the sea-weed, and the silent workers of this mighty structure."

But she raises her eyes for a moment, and sees a speck afar off, looking like a bird upon the vast deep.

At first she takes it for a pilot boat, but now the hull of a ship looms up from the blue waters; and what at first seemed to be a speck, proves now to be a well-filled sheet of canvass.

How proudly she sits upon the waters, buoyed up on the blue waves like an infant on the lap of its mother, playfully tossing to and fro! Bounding along joyously, she makes for port, the favouring winds bringing her directly towards St. Catherine's bar.

Why is it that Christiana Carle retraces her steps quickly? Joyously she joins the children's sport, either chasing the waves down to their lowest ebb, and allowing them to catch her before she gets quite back, for their amusement, or going with them into the edge of the island, to aid them in gathering bunches of a beautiful straw brush, peculiar to that kind of soil and situation.

By the time she reaches a crowd collected on the beach, her face is glowing with the exercise; and she is prepared for anything, but *most*, for a return home and hearing news of the new arrival.

A sad close, however, to this day's sport, was to be experienced by her before leaving the island :

The boat in which her father was, came in contact with another and was upset. He swam manfully for his life, old as he was, battling with the waves.

His waiting friends stood upon the shore, cheering him on, knowing that he was expert in the art of swimming; but, when only within a few yards of the shore, he exclaimed, "Carle is lost," and sunk, to rise no more.

A sad period ensued, which, my mother said, was hard to bear; for a refuge for the great sorrow of her life, had been purchased by the death of her dearest friend.

Philip Young—strange to say—had arrived in the very vessel she saw when on the beach.

He saw her as soon as he could under the distressing circumstances; and when my mother told him that she "felt as if it would be almost profanation, to take advantage of the death of her father, to disobey his wishes," he answered :

"Do *you* arrange the destinies of men, Christiana? Can you pry into the mysteries of the unseen? Why do you not rather contemplate in this the hand of God, which, in so many strange ways, has brought us together at last, with nothing to oppose our union?"

"My hand and heart are yours, Philip Young," said my mother, "and God forgive me if I seize the happiness he now places within my reach."

He placed the ring, which before she had worn near her heart, upon her finger, and sealed it with a kiss of plighted love.

The rest of the story I will make as brief as possible.

Poor Molock was crushed by the blow, and never afterwards was seen beyond these premises. It was supposed that the disappointment of such devotion as he had felt, crazed him partially, and plunged him into a desperate use of opium and spirits. These produced alternate stupor and delirium, so

that sometimes the stillness of death rested on this abode; and then again, nothing was heard for days, but the wild ravings of a maniac.

In the mean time, the negroes had wild tales about him, because they had heard of the dungeon under the carriage-house. That, however, was merely made as an entrance to the aqueduct, which was made from here to the river, connecting it with the bathing-house, which, you know, joins it.

As I see Miranda's look of astonishment is ready to burst forth in words, I will close by saying, that on his death, this house was left to an only cousin for life, and after that, to the eldest child of Christiana Carle.

"And now, my daughter, you see the history of the old gentleman has turned out to be, in truth, the history of your grandmother. Are you satisfied?"

"O yes, mamma," said Miranda, "I am perfectly satisfied. I feel very sorry for the old gentleman, although I am very glad he was not my grandfather!"

CHAPTER XI.

RAP, rap, rap, was heard at the door, which startled them all.

"Master's compliments to you, sir, and wants to know if you,—Mrs. Elliot, Miss Young, and Miss Miranda,—will join a party to the Retreat to-morrow, to eat fruit?"

"Well, Sam, if the rest are willing, I am. I see they are; so we will go, say to your master and mistress, with much pleasure."

The next morning was bright—yes, the brightest of the bright. The sky and water were beautifully blue. The trees,

the marshes, and the meadows green; and all reflected the light of a glorious sun.

The boats were manned,—the “Dolphin” and “Sea-Flower,”—clean blankets were spread on the mimic decks, to protect the ladies’ dresses from contact with salt water and mud; each rudder and helm were attached to their places; the anchors drawn up, and waiting oarsmen ready to perform their part of that day’s work.

And soon they were called upon; for here came the lively party, who were anticipating the sincerest pleasure.

A tall gentleman, dignified and commanding, yet mirthful and pleasant, walks among them. His ready wit, and his heartfelt laugh, was heard, as he walked down with old and young clustering around him.

He was the head of a large family, who loved him dearly, for he was the pastor of the village church. His name was a watchword for holy effort and resigned will, for they looked upon him as an angel of God, one prepared by much faith and patience for the courts above.

“O, Mr. Seaton, I am so glad you sent to ask *me*! I did want to go over the river so much!” said Miranda Elliot.

“Ah! I am glad to hear that you will be gratified,” said Mr. Seaton; “and if you like it well enough, take care I do not run away with you sometimes, when I go over by myself.”

“I wish you would,” said Miranda; “I would never be afraid by you.”

“Afraid of what, Miranda—porpoises or calves?” said Anna Young. “Do you mean, *now*, land or sea-monsters?”

“O, I am not afraid now, Aunt Anna, you know; not *too much* afraid, I mean,” said Miranda. “Mr. Seaton, Aunt Anna is a great tease, and she does make everything *so ridiculous*.”

“Miss Anna knows what weapons to make use of, I have no doubt, to cure ridiculous fancies,” said Mr. Seaton; “but

here we are, at the landing, and now we must hurry, or the spring-tide will meet us before we get to the creek's mouth."

The tide was very nearly half spent, so that there was a border of soft, blue mud to cross in getting to the boat; but this presented no difficulty. The brawny arms of the negroes soon lifted them all over, and placed them gently in the boat.

The ladies were seated opposite each other on the blankets; their work-baskets, books, and mysterious little packages, placed among them. The gentlemen were scattered about in convenient places, some of them sitting on the gunwale, at the head of the boat, their coat-tails dipping into the waves at every bound of the long, tapering bark.

Mr. Seaton steered the "Dolphin," and took the lead. Now, her head is turned out to the wide sheet of water, which looks almost glassy smooth, the current rushing rapidly down in the course they are going.

The negroes, before seating themselves, push her from the mud; and now she shelves down gradually, and seats herself, like a bird, upon the liquid element. As they progress down the first river, and turn the point of the strip of marsh, the vast mirror, and the vaster heavens seem blended into one. Clouds float above, and clouds float beneath, and Miranda says she "feels as if she was suspended in a clear glass ball."

"Miranda, there's a monster of the deep! Prepare your fears, now," said Anna Young.

"Where—where—where?" resounded from different parts of the boat.

"Hallo, there!" was shouted from the "Sea-Flower." "If you don't chase that deer, we will."

"Shoot ahead, *if you can*," said Mr. Seaton, who now stood up for one moment to scan the direction of the deer.

Vigorously it swam, with its small head and antlers above the stream. Every eye looked upon it with animation and desire; but Miranda's was the desire and hope that it might

escape—"O, I *do* hope—O, I *do* wish," were every moment heard from her.

"O, *dear* Mr. Seaton, *do* let it beat us."

"O, no—no—no!" said other voices. "The Sea-Flower will get him if you do not follow."

Swiftly the poor thing swam—eagerly it looked towards the distant shore.

The broad expanse of the bay and the distant ocean was in front of the boat. The tale of pines in front of the deer as it was crossing the track of the boat, far in advance.

He has crossed and is now a watery mile from the muddy margin of marsh. The boat-head strikes diagonally towards him, and the boatmen pull most vigorously for the devoted victim; but now they quarter a strong head tide, and the deer gains upon them.

"I believe we shall lose him, after all," said one of the gentlemen.

"Shoot him through the head!" said another

"No," said Mr. Seaton, "we must take no undue advantage of a struggling victim. He has taken to the water, and if he can escape by it, let him do so."

"Hurrah, boys, pull up, with all your might!" said anxious voices at the head of the boat.

The deer tacks again down the stream, and the boat pursues it still, favoured now by the quarter ebb.

"We'll catch him now," said Weaver John, one of the oarsmen, as he turned and looked over his wide shoulders, first one side, and then the other, to see his exact course. "We'll have some deer-meat for dinner, to-day."

"It will be too dear for you. Will it not?" said Anna, as she leaned over, and spoke to Miranda, who had laid her head on the gunwale of the boat.

"O, yes, indeed. *I cannot bear* to see such cruelty."

As she spoke, she raised her head to look towards the struggling victim.

It had arrived at shallow water; its back showed above, and then its taper legs; and now it sinks them down, again and again, into the smooth, soft mud, endeavouring to reach quickly the covert of the long, green marsh grass.

But it will not do. The boat strikes the exact place, and "Weaver John" jumps upon his back. In one moment the blue mud is dyed red with the blood of the victim.

Shouts, hurrahs, and congratulations resound from boat to boat, as they lay the deer in the head of the "Dolphin," and continue their excursion down the Bay.



CHAPTER XII.

A MAGNIFICENT grove of oaks rose above an irregular bluff, which was seen on the outline of the shore, to the left of the Retreat. This place occupied the extreme southern point of Bryan county.

Their majestic trunks towered up far above the head, and their interlapping branches formed a continuous bower, under which the noontide sun penetrated only in scattered rays. Here the huntsman's gun was never heard. Sacred shades these were to Nature, and to Nature's God!

Squirrels innumerable ran from bough to bough, disporting themselves playfully, as lords of the forest; and being abundantly provided with food, by the acorns and hickory-nuts, remained undisturbed and quiet possessors of their upper world.

Turtle-doves nestled among the young cedars, and remained unharmed, for their sad notes were peculiarly loved by Mr. Seaton, who retired here frequently for study and meditation.

Here was a desk, with a sloping lid, to keep off the rain,

and under this lid was a Bible. This desk was never locked, and near it was a seat between two giant trees. There were also seats in other parts of the grove, for rest, for meditation, or for social converse.

One of these was placed next to a point, around which ran a creek that at high tide looked clear and limpid over the white shells. The point itself juts out with more than common pretension, and from its extreme angle grows a gnarled and overhanging oak. So horizontal is it, that one can walk out on the trunk, and in the shallow wave beneath witness the quick movements of fish and crabs. Near this there was a bench, one of those seats we have already mentioned, and beneath the feet were shells, pure and white, washed by the rains of unknown centuries.

Here, and throughout the grove, the young people abundantly amused themselves. Baskets of fruit had been brought down to regale them—peaches and nectarines, with the deep blush of the summer's sun, resting upon their upturned cheeks. Grapes, also, were mingled among them; and an occasional orange, just barely shaded with a yellow tinge, and not yet ripe enough to be brought fully into the enjoyments of taste.

But even these do not absorb entirely their attention. Here we see a cluster of little girls, looking down with curious eyes, about the projecting roots of trees, and along the edges of the bluff.

They are seeking the many-coloured fungi that spring up in the dense shade of the forest, and they prize them as they would rare exotics, and anticipate giving them an honourable place in their home-collection of curiosities.

Through the vista of the trees, in a retired walk, leading further on, around the margin of the bluff, were two interesting girls—their arms entwined around each other—and occasionally they were engaged in reading from a book they had between them.

Time and place to them were only accessories to thought, giving fresh impetus to that inner life which they were now fully conscious of possessing. The overhanging trees; the gently undulating ground; the groups of happy children; the baskets of luscious and beautiful fruit; while across the grove, and verging in the bright sunlight, a small cot, with its clustering gourd and bean-vines; the wide fields of marsh beyond, with its spots of green hammock rising here and there; and further off, still on the horizon, the line of blue waters insensibly mingle in with their present being. Yet within their own minds there is something that elevates them above the overhanging trees; that leads them out beyond the bright sunlight; that places them upon the wide ocean of destiny, wafting them through the ideal world of poetry and romance.

The "midsummer day's dream" of imagination is brooding over them with soft and dreamy wings. The misty and uncertain air is radiating with a thousand hues. The undefined but ever-pleasing images of the future rise up and float around them, imparting a delightful feeling of pleasure and repose.

A beautiful picture was enacted at the point, where the overhanging oak was reaching its arms down, as if to touch the rippling wave beneath.

Miranda Elliot stood upon the trunk near where the white shells of the bank and the gnarled roots of the tree combine, in rough but pleasing contrast. She was a picture worthy of an artist's touch. A most perfect but natural figure—one unconfined by the bands and whalebones of the fashionable art. The truly oval contour of her face; the Grecian outline of her features; the lofty expression of her brow, with the clustering of her golden curls, seemed as if she might be given as a personification of the ideal, the realization of the pure, the beautiful, and the refined.

She held out her arms with eager expectation towards the thick, green boughs that rose up before her, from the horizontal trunks.

The foliage was rudely agitated for awhile, and amid the dark green of their glossy leaves might be seen a moving object intensely interested in some pursuit. At last it was successful, and a welcome shout announced the event.

A soft bunch of gray fur, and a cunning little head, with a pair of bright eyes, was seen in the hands of Harry Cleveland, as he made his appearance from the dense covert. His face was animated by the exercise, and beaming with smiles and dimples.

"Now, Miranda, you must take good care of it, or it will get away from you directly."

"O, yes, that I will," said Miranda; "I mean to keep it as long as I live. Give it to me now, Harry," she added, extending her hands until they nearly touched it; but, the squirrel looking belligerent, Harry held it away from her, saying,

"Ah, but you wouldn't keep it as long as you could spell your name, if you were to take it now!"

"Why not?"

"Because it would bite you with its sharp teeth, and you would be obliged to let it go; but if you wish to hold it, I think I can fix it for you."

And so saying, he seated himself on the trunk of the tree, and taking out a red silk handkerchief, began to envelop its neck, wrapping fold after fold around, until, after awhile, its head looked as if it was set in the midst of a soft cushion. And Miranda looked on with wondering eyes, laughing at its huge cravat; while the squirrel, from its quizzical expression imparted by the new envelope, seemed almost conscious of acting in an unnatural character.

It was now deposited in her arms with safety; and her joyful countenance indicated that it would be a never-ending source of amusement to her.

"Miranda, won't you name it after me?"

"I thought all squirrels were named 'Bunny;' but I will

name it after you, for it has given you a hard race. Hasn't it, Harry?"

"Yes, *that it has*; and I don't believe I would have caught it, anyhow, if it had not been for the water under that tree. The little fellow knew very well it wouldn't agree with him."

These two children, intent upon their own pleasures, thought not that there could be any impropriety in their appropriating this sweet, little, bright-eyed beauty to themselves. Miranda imagined him already in the cage she had found at home, in a lumber-room. She saw him already running on its bars, turning gayly in the morning's sun, and giving pleasure and delight to her brother and sister.

But, indeed, there is no knowing what she did not imagine of pleasure in connexion with this newly gained prize.

And Harry Cleveland—he had his imaginings too. Miranda Elliot was a little beauty, and he had always thought so, particularly when he saw her across the village church on Sabbath. For shame, Harry, if indeed you were conscious of such idle fancies!

He was an only son, and his mother was a widow. She lived out by the Oak-forest Road, with a wide green common dividing her from the rest of the village, while on every side but the one she was hedged in by forest trees, by brushwood of many kinds, and clinging vines.

There were some open spots of greensward where the sun penetrated smilingly; then near by were clumps of tangled woods, where were bowers formed of nature's network, interlacing and adorned with the evergreen verdure of an abiding spring.

Here Harry found it rather dull in the evenings, after parting with his school companions, and he often said to his mother—"O, mother, I *do wish* you had a daughter!"

"Well, Harry, you must be a good boy, so that you will make a good man; and then I hope I shall have a good daughter one of these days."

At first he looked at her wonderingly, but the truth of what she meant flashing on his mind, he smiled and said,

"Well, I wish then I had a *sister*—*that* is what I mean."

"Well, my son, you had better be satisfied, and look forward to what is attainable. If you will try to be a good man one of these days, I will promise that you may get a good wife."

"Thank you, mam—but that *may* sounds so *doubtful*, that I will satisfy myself at once with this old book of 'Voyages round the World.'" And soon he was on the wide ocean, among the dashing billows, his mind lost to the dullness of the former hour, for he was ardent, enthusiastic, and highly intellectual.

There was a season of the year, however, that always compensated Harry more or less for all these dull moments, and that was the jubilee of the village school children—jessamine season. This flower is funnel-shaped, expanding out around the edges, with five deep scollops. It is a bright-yellow; soft and delicate texture, and fills the air with most delightful perfume.

The interlacing vines that clustered so thickly on the small trees and under-brush around Mrs. Cleveland's lot were covered with these fragrant flowers. Then the school girls went out every evening, and the boys bending down the supple limbs, they mounted, and seating themselves in the midst of flowers, strung long necklaces and head-bands, to return to the village with. These were scenes and amusements that he looked as joyously for as he ever did for those merry Christmas hours, when freedom from tasks and the company of the young were sure to be blended together.

And now I wonder if Harry did not think what a beautiful picture Miranda would make, seated on a bed of green leaves with beautiful flowers all around her, and he nearest, the favourite boy, to hand her fresh flowers, to ride her up and

down upon the buoyant, bending tree, and to receive for himself the largest share of her sweet smiles.

"What murderous intent has possessed you and Miranda, Harry?" said Anna Young, who approached with Helen Rose and others.

"No murderous intent at all, Miss Anna; but a very kind and protecting one."

By this time the children had gathered around and were saying, "O, how beautiful! O, how beautiful!" and they all wished that *they* could catch a squirrel too.

Anna looked sorry when she saw the little captive in Miranda's arms; and Harry, seeing this, said, laughing,

"We don't intend to kill him, Miss Anna. We have just rescued him from savage life, and intend introducing him into civilized life."

"Against his own consent? Will you tear him away from these shady bowers, where his savage propensities (if, indeed, such soft fur and innocent eyes could ever cover a savage nature) look lovely and refined under the protecting care of a kind and benevolent Master?"

"Yes, indeed," said Harry, animated by his success, and the pleasure he had imparted to Miranda; "and we will give him a two-storied house to live in, a soft bed to lie upon, and a gilded circle of bright bars to play on from 'early morn to starry eve.'"

"Yes—and an age of desolate loneliness. A life of gilded misery."

"O, Aunt Anna," said Miranda, in a very pitiful voice, for she saw plainly disapproval in her aunt's face, "I did want to keep this pretty little squirrel *so much*—to feed every day, and see him run round and round upon the bars."

"Well, here is Mr. Seaton, Miranda. Let us ask him what is the difference between chasing a deer, and chasing a squirrel?" and she turned round to explain to him, but he smiled and said,

"O, I know all about the affair, and I can see very plainly," nodding at Miranda, "who is the *most* interested, and," nodding at Harry, "who is the next. And now I want you to tell me, my daughter," seating himself and drawing her near to his side, "what is the difference between chasing a deer, and chasing a squirrel?"

"O, Mr. Seaton," said Miranda, very earnestly, and looking up to him with a pleading face, "there is a *great* difference. When they were chasing the deer, they wanted to *kill* it. All they thought of was the *meat*. And in chasing the squirrel we only wanted it to play with—to love and to pet."

"You hear, Anna," said Mr. Seaton, smiling. "She pleads her cause like a little philosopher, for she has already arrived at the conclusion that the nature of an offence lies in the intention. But, Miranda, I want to ask you another question. If you knew that the conclusion *would be the same*, would you still desire to take captive the squirrel?"

"Do you *know* that it would die, Mr. Seaton?"

"The best way to arrive at any certainty on that point, is to take the experiences of others. Suppose, by the way of passing time pleasantly while here, we ask for the experience of some present on the subject? Are you willing?"

"Well," said Miranda, in a quiet voice, and looking down upon the squirrel as if it was more than half gone already.

"I will appoint myself as chairman, then, and keep this seat, with Miranda by me. And now, Anna, although you have not a much older head than these girls, yet we all think you have a wiser one, so tell us what you know of squirrel petting."

"The first year I stayed with sister, I had a squirrel, which I prized very much. It was my first care in the morning, my last in the evening, and was never forgotten. I had often heard that, when caught, they always died, either from loss of freedom or neglect; but I was determined that mine should not die from either. I paid it unbounded attention until it was tame, and then, every day, it had its freedom to run on

the trees around the house. It was always obedient to my call, running joyfully to me whenever I called it." Miranda turned, and looked hopefully at Mr. Seaton, as if she was gaining some confidence on her side. "One day, when taking out to him a handful of freshly cracked nuts, I reached the piazza just in time to see him fall lifeless from the tree. A boy passing by with his bow and arrow, took him for a wild squirrel and shot him. I quietly carried his cage to the lumber-room, determining never again to curtail, for my pleasure, the freedom of a squirrel."

Maria Kingston and Mary Landon, the two girls who had been walking and reading together, had approached, and were standing interested listeners.

"Miss Maria, can you not give us some experience with regard to squirrels?"

"O yes, sir, indeed I can! I can most truly say, that they are the most mischievous things in nature, and not worth taking from such a home as this. I had one once, and having no cage, I kept it in a room. It was pleased with its wide domain, running up and down the curtains and everywhere it pleased. One day we heard a tremendous crash, and, half terrified, we went into the room, where we found a large mirror dashed into a thousand pieces! The fluttering movements of the terror-stricken squirrel attracted our notice, and there we saw him on the top of the curtain, looking down upon us, with conviction depicted on his arch and cunning face. This, I assure you, cured me of having such a pet. The mirror was one highly prized from association, as well as for its value; and being very heavy was confined by a rope at the back. This 'Bunny' had gnawed in two."

"But, Miss Maria," said Miranda, "Bunny did not know any better."

"And, therefore, Miranda, we could expect nothing better from him," said Miss Maria. "A squirrel is nothing but a squirrel, and their proper place is the wild woods. But Helen

has something to tell you; I know by her looks. Hav'n't you, Helen?"

"O, yes; I have had no less than two squirrels. One was torn from its cage by a cat; and the other, being at liberty, disappeared; and after two or three days was found, fastened behind a trunk in the closet, dead. Since then I assure you I have a horror of petting anything whose home is in the wild woods."

"Here, Harry," said Miranda, drawing a long breath, as if she felt relieved at last, and, placing it in his hands, she continued, "take off his cravat and let him run up the tree. It will be happy—and when it dies it will be in its own shady grove."

Mr. Seaton *looked* his approval, and rising, took her by the hand, bidding them all to follow, and that the "rest of the party would be awaiting them for dinner."

CHAPTER XIII.

SUCH were the gentle means by which Miranda's mind was led to think, to reason, and to draw its own conclusions.

In this instance Mr. Seaton's kind nature, and his repugnance to refuse her earnest wishes, led him to adopt the same plan. He was charmed at the readiness with which she comprehended and applied the lessons that were presented to her; and ever after this time there appeared to be a bond of sympathy between the two.

The pastor, firm and unyielding in principle, kind and benevolent in nature, cheerful even to gayety in social intercourse; and the growing maiden, developing and still developing day after day, year after year. Like the tender twig, which receives strength from the light and air of heaven, pos-

seeming within its organization the same kindred elements, so she, possessing within her soul the elements of truth, received from every mental and spiritual influence the strengthening power of a divine and exalted life.

But this day of pleasure and instruction was not yet at an end. The grove and the walks on the left of the "Retreat" had been the morning's amusement. The margin of woods, skirting along the bluff on the right side, was to constitute the afternoon's walk. The cedar trees, with their thickly covered limbs and agreeable foliage, protected them from the afternoon's sun, while here and there rose a majestic oak or a lofty palm, as an index of what had been the first proprietors of the soil.

Through the trees and still further to the right, over a field of marsh was seen an island belonging to Mr. Seaton, called "Belle-isle." This was, most of it, in one extensive cotton-field, over which, here and there, could be seen banks of oystershells; and all around it was left a green margin of trees, similar to the one described.

Across the marsh, which was too soft to be trodden by the foot of man or beast, was formed a causeway of logs and shells, over which, excepting at spring tides, the negroes could pass on foot. At those times a large flat took them around through the creek from landing to landing; and then the air resounded with their boat songs, and the full burst of a hearty chorus.

Through the margin on the main-land, and opposite to "Belle-isle," the party wandered in groups—a few grown persons there, or a cluster of children here. There was a link in memory formed here that never was forgotten by Miranda, for it brought back again to her mind the earliest shadow that had crossed her young life—the death of Eliza Carter.

Mr. Seaton held her hand, and they both stood by the family graveyard. It was an enclosure of simple wooden railing, and the head pieces to the graves were also of wood,

for the family had not all been gathered home; and their house was one not made with hands.

An enormous oak threw its long arms almost entirely over it, for the spot stood out from the margin, where there was a plenty of space and sunlight to promote its growth. Springing from its very root there was a grape-vine, large and vigorous. It hung in massive and verdant festoons from the lower branches, and clinging in some places to the railing, seemed to throw a loving net-work around this sacred spot. And still this did not satisfy the ever-clinging, ever-extending vine. Upward it grew, throwing aloft, even towards the very summit of the tree, green and tender shoots, that in the afternoon's sun seemed smiling on the darker and more sombre hue of those below.

Miranda looked thoughtfully upon the little graves that, from being sheltered beneath their shadowy pall, were bare of all verdure but wild violets of various kinds. They grew in the corners of the paling, and here and there among the graves, were rank clusters of the richest and darkest green leaves, with flowers peeping out among them, paled almost to whiteness by the deep shadows.

She turned her eyes towards Mr. Seaton's face, and although he too looked thoughtful, a smile rested upon his countenance. It was a smile of universal love—that love which, springing from the Great Source, is manifested in all His works—all that adore and praise Him. And all His works praise Him, that fill the design of their existence! Even inanimate nature praises Him in its rule and order—the undeviating laws of its formation—the richness of its abundance, and the beauty of its adaptation. And animated nature! The birds that sing their sweet carol to the early dawn; or, true to the instincts of their nature, cover with maternal love, the bursting shell of their expected young. They, too, praise and adore the hand that formed them, because they represent, in the continual chain of their formation, the same undeviating laws

of their being; and they forget never to carol forth their sweet songs, or to brood with anxious solicitude over the home-nest, for the formation of which they have existed.

And man—happy and smiling—how is it that here, by the vestiges of past hopes and expectations, your face is beaming with that smile of universal love? How is it, that with all your young shootlings broken off and lying beneath the soft clod and the green violets, the spreading branches and the clinging vines, you can still look down with a smile upon them?

That bird that chirrups above your head is unconscious that a bowstring of yesterday had sped an arrow through the heart of its young one that, fully fledged, had left its native tree, and ventured out into the world beyond. But you have watched the ebbing life of your young ones—you have received their expiring sighs; and, keenly conscious of suffering humanity, answered their agony with every pulsation of your throbbing heart. How is it then that you are smiling amid the wreck of earthly hopes?

And Miranda mused now again about death, and she felt that it is not always invested with gloom and despair. Her parents had taught her that there was beauty connected even with the grave, that place of repose; and now, Mr. Seaton's smile seemed like a halo thrown round the resting-place of those loved ones; and her mind said to her soul, "How is it that he can smile?" and her soul answered, "It is the smile of God, reflected on this tower of strength that he has built up above the rude passions of earth. Faith has purified it; and there *love* has taken up her eternal abode."

"Miranda, do you know where heaven is?"

She looked up surprised, but answered promptly,

"I *used* to think that it was above the skies; but now I know that heaven is *where God is*!"

"Why do you think so?"

"One reason is, because I know that wherever God is, there

is no sin ; and another is," and she hesitated slightly, but continued with a truth-speaking face, "because I see you smile at the grave of your children."

"And why does that make you think so?"

"Because I know that God must be in your soul, or you would weep when you stand here and know that they are buried in the dark ground."

As she looked up at him with the earnest expression of real feeling, she saw that he was looking upward, as if contemplating something above the earth. He at last said earnestly, and with great feeling,

"They are freed for ever from the sufferings of earth, and admitted into the kingdom of God. And now, Miranda," he said, looking down again upon her, "how do I know but that these children of my love are around me daily and hourly, awaiting that joyful moment when I may join them in the spirit world? And if, as you say, *heaven is where God is*, why should we not in our souls have a foretaste of heavenly bliss? If we love God, as we do a dear father—if we trust his love, as you would a dear mother's love, why should we not, even here, enjoy the happiness of this love and this trust?"

"I do not know, sir; but I suppose it is because we think that God is so far above us."

"And yet he is not only our Creator, but continual Pre-server!"

"Yes, sir; but the Bible says that as high as the heavens are above the earth, so high are His ways above our ways, and His thoughts above our thoughts."

"You are correct—but the meaning of that is, that in purity, in holiness, He is infinitely superior; for, being the fountain of all good, He is Himself the essence of all perfection; but so far from separating us from Him, it but shows that He is altogether able, and abundantly qualified to relieve to the uttermost, the necessities of our sinful nature. What

would we do, Miranda, if He was not infinitely superior to ourselves?"

"You are right, Mr. Seaton," said Miranda, in a cheerful tone; "you are right, I know. When I have heard that text sometimes, it has made me tremble; but now I feel that it is to make us trust in God, and love Him."

As she finished her sentence, Mr. Seaton drew her by the hand to the sunniest side of the tree, where hung a luxuriant branch of the vine. There he pushed aside the leaves, and disclosed rich clusters of grapes, several of which he plucked and put into her hand. Looking more attentively for a few minutes, he found the chrysalis of a worm, and placing it in a piece of paper taken from his pocket, gave it into her hands.

"You may eat the grapes if you wish; but this you must put in a little paper box, and keep it till you see it change. Then you must look at it, and think of it, and let it tell you why I do not weep at the grave of my children."

She looked up at him—for his voice had faltered—and she saw that though his lip quivered, and a tear was in his eye, a smile of benign love still illuminated his face, like a reflection from something beyond this life.

Miranda returned with the party to the landing-place, walking down from the house to the orange grove, whose immense trees were laden with clusters of golden fruit, not yet fully ripened by the summer's sun.

They embarked again in the "Dolphin" and "Sea-Flower;" passed down the creek; and on their way small hammocks covered with cedars, which Miranda thought would make beautiful fairy dominions.

They went out into the large river again, where they could look down to the ocean and up to their village home. They passed once more the track of the deer chase, about which Miranda was silent, remembering the squirrel chase. They stood once more upon the landing at home, and mingled with home associations; but Miranda never forgot the associations,

and the lessons of that day of mingled pleasure and instruction.

CHAPTER XIV.

TIME passed on, imprinting still its lessons on Miranda's heart and life; for on the heart was made the impress, and on the life the development. The butterfly lesson had been taught her by Mr. Seaton, with its touching and simple analogy to the soul, that, when freed from the grovelling nature of earthly sense, rises superior in order, in perception, and in enjoyment, soaring aloft to the great Source, to the eternal Fountain of light.

The merry peal that we have already rung out, had summoned Miranda to the village school. With Harry Cleveland she was still the 'fairy' and the favourite, for, although he remembered with some mortification the squirrel scrape, yet many a jessamine-picking had obliterated its disappointments.

There were periods of time in which Mr. Elliot left the village, either for the north, or to mingle in the world elsewhere, for the village was a retired nook, in which the world ever appeared only in miniature.

Anna Young always accompanied them. Indeed she had, since her sister's marriage, been reared in the bosom of her family, receiving private instructions from Mr. Elliot; and from her early matured habits and mind, aiding, as we have seen, in developing the mind of Miranda.

Helen Rose had always remained in the village; but was, as we have already said, a wild flower of most exquisite grace and beauty. She indeed possessed a native refinement, and elegance of manner, for superior to all the adornments of art.

Anna and Helen had fully completed their school days; although, for Miranda's sake and others around them, they

mingled a great deal with the young. While Miranda, greatly grown beyond our former acquaintance, was actually in her *teens*, springing up, a graceful shoot, round, symmetrical, and well proportioned.

Her hair had become a soft dark brown, still curling, her ringlets rested lovingly and light on the turning of her fair shoulders, which, though sometimes uncovered, were on ordinary occasions concealed under the jealous care of a high-necked apron.

Her eyes were as ever, blue and loving; but in addition, they now glowed with the hidden light of thought, bearing the true impress of her mother's soul, with her father's lofty intellect.

"Ah, my daughter, and where now are you going?" said Mr. Elliot to her one evening, as she tripped lightly out into the front piazza, with her bonnet on and a basket on her arm.

"I am going to see old Mrs. Lewis, sir."

"And what have you in that mysterious little basket? Come here and let me see, if there is anything in it but a little mouse."

"I must delay *my* trial of your curiosity this evening, my dear father," said Miranda, smiling, and laying her hand on his. "It is getting late, and I am in a hurry, will you excuse me?"

"O yes, certainly I will," and kissing her, she passed on, and went her way. It was one of *real* charity, which we will learn by the conversation of Mr. and Mrs. Elliot.

She joined her husband in the piazza just as Miranda was going down the front steps; and stood smiling for a moment, as she looked at her, passing quickly along the grassy walk up the bay.

"Miranda seems very intent on accomplishing some mission this afternoon. What is it, Maria?"

"It is a mission of true charity, my dear,—self-suggested, and persevered in with an earnest, self-sacrificing nature."

"Ah! how is it?"

"Well, she found out, sometime ago, that old Mrs. Lewis was in want, being dependent on her neighbours for the necessaries of life, and too infirm now to earn them herself. With a natural discrimination, which astonishes me, she said, 'Mother, it is time for me to be learning to *sew*: will you let me do these towels?' 'O yes,' I said, 'certainly you can.' 'But, mother,' she said, 'I shall want you to pay me for them,' she hesitated, when I looked round surprised; but she continued earnestly, 'I want to do something *myself*, to aid poor old Mrs. Lewis, and I cannot do it myself in any other way.' 'Well, my daughter,' I said, 'I will even more gladly give them to you on those terms.'"

"What does she receive for them?" said Mr. Elliot; "does she ask a *high price*?"

"No, on the contrary, she will only receive the customary price for them."

"Dear child," said her father; "she certainly has implanted in her mind, the fundamental principles of truth and integrity. Do you know, Maria, that I prize that last trait even more than I do the first?"

"Why so?"

"Because it proves to me, that she has a well balanced mind; and that even as young as she is, it is under the guidance of that true regulator of the mind, conscientiousness."

"Go on, Mr. Elliot, and let me know why it is, that benevolence—one of the highest attributes of our nature—may not be a law unto itself."

"Because, being a mere *motive* faculty, it must act through other faculties of the mind. Thus we see it under the guidance of approbateness, being satisfied, when for its exercise it gains the approval of others. It is often again, (and very strangely), acted upon by an opposite faculty: and that is acquisitiveness, where for one's personal indulgence of

this feeling, large demands are made upon others. These, in their analysis, contain the very essence of selfishness."

"'Let not your right hand know, what your left hand doeth,' is then a most important direction : and the estimation, in which the 'widows mite' was held, by our Saviour, one of the truest signification."

"No doubt, they were given as directions, to guard us against devoting to the service of the world, the highest faculties of our minds ; for if we did, with what are we then to cultivate that higher life within us, which waits but to be clothed upon with immortality, to show either its expansion or its dearth ?"

And there, Mr. and Mrs. Elliot walked again, talking of Miranda ; not as they did once before in our remembrance, of her just dawning physical life ; but of that mental and spiritual life, which they saw, showing itself in fresh beauty every day.

But, as time bids us in his flight to hasten onward, we bid her also "God speed," on her pathway of flowers, while we stop to gather only a few more, to weave among the wild flowers of this simple village wreath. These were rare exotics, of which, friend, you must be the judge.



CHAPTER XV.

AMONG Mr. and Mrs. Elliot's acquaintances formed abroad, there were none more highly esteemed by them, than Signor Gonzalez, and Signora Isabella Rosco, from whom they had frequently solicited a visit.

They more earnestly desired this, from the fact, that they were obliged to pass them, in going either to or from home, being residents of an estate in Cuba. The family were natives

of St. Domingo; but the change in the government in the Spanish part of that island, separating it from the Spanish Crown, compelled them to remove. Indeed, they had reason to suppose that they would have been destroyed, but for the timely rescue of them by a cousin of their father's, who, commanding a vessel of his own, took them to one of his estates in Cuba.

Seignora Rosco had been educated in New York city; and having formed an attachment for the States, frequently returned for the summer months.

They were on their return now, to the south, and intending a visit to this secluded village, landed in a steamer on St. Catherine's Island, from which place they took a boat. This excited much attention as it came bounding over the blue waves—first, like a speck, but soon manifesting itself by the lengthened pull of the oar—the boat sang with its sweet, full cadence, borne upon the evening air; and then as it came nearer, the distinct outline of forms, with occasionally a manly, noble figure rising and standing at the helm. Indeed, the whole appearance of the boat showed that it was not a market boat, or, indeed, any ordinary visiter.

So Mr. and Mrs. Elliot were prepared to welcome visitors, when just as they landed, a speedy messenger was sent up to announce Seignor and Seignora Rosco. With what hearty and welcoming steps, they hastened down to meet their long expected friends!

"We are charmed to see you," said Mr. Elliot; "but we are as much surprised to see you approach us this way, as the Indians were to see Columbus."

"And we had no idea of it ourselves," said Gonzalez, "until proposed by some friends of my sister's living on St. Catherine's. They suggested the route, offering to send us from there to you."

"Yes sir," said Seignora Rosco, who had been conversing with Mrs. Elliot, "we had no idea of resigning, this season, our

visit to yourself and dear Mrs. Elliot, so we adopted the ideas of our friends. Besides, you know, my dear sir, as children of the sea, we should always prefer water to land."

"O yes," said Mr. Elliot; "we care not from what quarter of the compass you come, so we but feel secure of your bodily presence."

"Ah! my friend," said Signora Isabella, "I am afraid you will find us *bodily* very restless; you know we are winging our way south."

"Well, but Isabella," said her brother, "that need not be spoken of *now*. You are always telling me that I am restless; but bear witness for me, Mrs. Elliot, that my staid and sober sister has given the first indications."

"Yes, and we hope the indications will end just where they have begun," said Mrs. Elliot.

"At present they shall," said Isabella, pressing her friend's hand with warmth to her side, as if she would fain introduce her into the innermost sanctuary of her feelings.

But while they are received by the whole family—Anna and the children being old acquaintances also—we will introduce them to those who never have seen them.

Signora Rosco was younger than her brother, but from her matured mind and quiet manners, she seemed older. Above the medium height, and well developed in figure, she may have been thought by some, slightly too large; but for the rounded symmetry of every line, the grave and indefinable beauty of every movement. In her manners there was an ease, accompanied by a modesty, that imparted a charming grace to her whole appearance.

Gonzalez Rosco was a personification of everything manly in appearance and noble in action.

His face was an oval—also his sister's—the outlines soft and perfect in both; her eyes were a hazel of the darkest shade, while his were black; their hair might have been taken for the same, one was so much like the other—as brown as

black, and as black as brown—soft, waving, and abundant. Her complexion was a brunette, but the clearest, softest, kind imaginable—every impulse of the heart manifesting itself in the rosy tinging of the lips and cheeks. In her, it seemed blended with the lily, the rest of her face was so pure and clear. In his, the brunette was much deeper, excepting on his brow, which was white, smooth, and elevated, being the counterpart of his sister's. Her hair was wrapped in soft wide plaits around her head, and confined with a real Spanish comb, over which she threw her Spanish mantilla, with ineffable grace.

His lay over his head in soft and waving locks, free to be acted upon by every breeze of Heaven, or every excitement of his own mind. Generally, it shaded his brow too much; but he never failed to attract the attention of others, when with a sudden movement of his head he threw it back, or less excited, perhaps he run his hand through its silky folds, lifting the curtain entirely from the brightest ornament of his person.

The brother and sister were alike in one respect—though always refined and elegant, they seemed to give no second thought to the particularities of the toilet. No gaudy colours decorated them—they aimed at no artistic effect, through the aid of tire-women and barbers, tailors and mantua-makers; but the genuine merit of their characters first presented itself to the mind.

She, full of soul and feeling, beaming through rich, dark, intelligent eyes. He, overflowing with vivacity and life, was the soul of mirth and enjoyment to all around him.

Yet in this respect they were more unlike than in any other. In her, there was a softness, almost amounting at times to languor, truly Spanish. While in him, there was a vivacity almost French, in its excess.

Strangely we see in the history of man, the coloured threads of human events. Some of them are either lost, or so blended,

together, we do not distinguish them in the mass—while others display themselves ever and anon through the mingled web; and unmistakably we analyze the starting point of union—plainly we trace the continuance. In one place, it combines with other threads harmoniously—in another it is lost to view—while again it starts out as bright, and palpably to view as ever.

How strange, again we say, is the course of human events! They are like the mingling of dyes; a most important process in the colouring art—and do they not give the colouring hue to life?

Are there not shadows resting on some face, at other times lit up with life, animation, and love? Some thread is now exhibiting itself to view, years ago introduced into the mesh, albeit with a careless, thoughtless hand. Are there not leprous spots upon some hearts, unseen by human eye?

There the thread is passing, passing ever, weaving all the stronger, for being denied the light.

And bright and golden threads are woven in among them, throwing at times a softened charm, and then again a brilliant ray into that withering heart, and over that face, shaded with the corroding cares of remembrance.

Cares sat lightly on Mr. Elliot's family circle, the evening of their friends' arrival; and if shadows passed, they lingered only for a moment, to make more delightfully prized, and more beautiful the enjoyment of social intercourse.

Mr. and Mrs. Elliot and Anna were near Signora Isabella, and Helen, who was with the family that evening, looked at her with eyes and heart seemingly charmed and fascinated by the new and bewitching style of the stranger. You must remember, to appreciate Helen's delight, that she was a true villager, never having seen, and only in her infant imagination remembering, anything of the world abroad. And we will not deny that her eyes sometimes wandered across the room, to the handsome young man, who was engaged in talking to

the children. They were seated around him, and all seemed mutually interested and interesting.

Ella was growing tall, and was a pure, gentle, fairy-like girl, bright and delicate in mind, and rather shrinking away from any intercourse but that of the nursery. Yet she was too well read, and had even already, seen too much of the world, not to be polite to all, and ready always to give an answer when addressed. So she turned her soft blue eyes very sweetly up to those bright black ones, that encouraged her to pleasant enjoyment.

Miranda too was there, joining in pleasant reminiscences of the past summer; and John looking on so gravely, that Señor Gonzalez said he looked like a Senator.

Soon there was an apparition at the door—but one not entirely unknown to us. A little black lady of a most compact and complete figure, with the drapery that fell around her, perfect in every fold. A blue dress was the only coloured thing that could be seen—and that only partially, for a capacious apron of white extended more than half way round her. The folded kerchief of white was around her neck; and on her head towered as ever, the voluminous muslin, with its mysterious ins and outs—while two little ends peeped out coquettishly on one side.

Most surely Mom Elsy never would have chosen a black *skin*, if it had been left to herself; for she manifested in everything she could control, such a passion for the opposite. There was one thing about her person, that Mom Elsy seemed really proud of: and that was a set of as firm, even, and pearly white teeth, as could be seen anywhere: and these she could neither speak nor smile, without seeming to exhibit.

But though Mom Elsy was a little *black* lady, enveloped in white, she had a heart as pure as the crystal stream. Yes, as pure as those streams that gurgle through the wilderness of untrained nature, undiscovered by the eye of man; but manifest in every hidden recess to the eye of God. The clinging

vines and clustering boughs bend over them, hiding them away in their dark covert; but here and there a ray of light penetrates, reflecting down upon the bright and sparkling water.

If you could have looked with me into the nursery, and heard Ella with her gentle voice, reading to her "maumer," and answering her questions with her best ability, you would have felt, that there were strong intuitions in that mind.

But there was ever one peculiarity about it; the book was always the Bible. She had no thirst for any other knowledge, but that which came direct from the fountain of everlasting truth.

To those, whose *chosen* task it to dive into the secret policy of government, both temporal and divine; and for the *relief of the Eternal Mind* would fain subvert the conservative principles of earthly law, what an irritating lesson it would have been, to listen to the conclusions of Mom Elsy's own mind, upon the penalties of sin, inflicted upon Adam, Cain, and Ham!

But, as this is not *our* task, we turn again to our fair young heroine, who is seated still by "Mr. Gonzales," as she calls him.

"Now, Miranda," he said, "you must repay me for all the care I took of you last summer on the lakes and at Saratoga; and I beg, you will not forget those wearisome speeches we used to hear in the Capitol."

"O, if I have to pay for those, Mr. Gonzales, I am afraid the debt will be so large, I will not be able to meet it."

"Well, then, I will cancel what is over for the present, and renew the demand when I come again; will that suit you?"

"O yes, I delight in paying such debts as those; but how shall I begin?"

"Well, your first and principal care must be, to make me well acquainted with your Aunt Anna."

"Well, that will be easy, for I will only have to do what is

already done. Why, Mr. Gonzales, don't you remember that day, when we all went together to Mount Vernon, that sweet place, and saw those beautiful flowers?"

"O yes, I remember, and that reminds me of something that happened then; those flowers were sweet to everybody but me."

"Oh, I am sorry; were you sick?"

"Yes," and he rested his brow for a moment on his hand, and his rich dark hair fell over it; but the lively girl jumped up, saying:

"Well! now, Mr. Gonzalez, you shall neither be sick or sad, while you are here, if I can help it."

Just then his sister called him across the room, saying,

"Brother, just think! this young lady is a native of Cuba, and left there when she was very small."

"Ah!" said Gonzalez Rosco, approaching with animation, "what age were you when you left there?"

"Oh, I do not know; I was very small indeed."

"What! before you could remember anything?"

"I can remember only a great deal of confusion, the vessel, the ocean, and papa's bringing me away with him to a beautiful island; and then to this country."

Isabella's face expressed the most earnest meaning, as she gazed upon the interesting stranger; and Gonzales, too, looked almost wonderingly at that luxuriant beauty, which seemed then first to arrest his attention. Helen's hair, which had become a dark auburn, hung still in loose soft ringlets to her waist; but they were thrown back; her bust and form stood out in beautiful proportion, her clear complexion brightened with emotion, her lips parted, and her eyes beamed with animation.

And now, shadows passed lightly over, and lingered in pensive beauty in the eyes of Isabella, that looked if they were seeking the spirit-world, and striving, but in vain, to

bring near some distant object, or to realize some fairy visions of the mind.

But, ah, that shadow was soon dispelled, that beautiful picture passed away.

Helen rose to leave, for she felt after all, that though a Cuban, she was but a stranger, and Isabella with a sigh, kissed her and said,

“Do come again very soon.”



CHAPTER XVI.

“O WHAT thoughts I *have*, Gonzalez! I cannot help it, the impression is *overwhelming*.”

“But she says she is a Cuban, and you know, Isa, we are *not Cubans*.”

“But she was too young to know *what* she was. That remembrance of confusion and flight seemed to bring her into my arms.”

“Yes, it was enough to touch you, I know; but, my dear sister, do not let your feelings run away with your judgment. On all others, you can give me lessons; but on this, I am obliged to give them to you.”

“Gonzales, do you think you feel earnest *enough*? Remember, you never saw her; and therefore, you may think of her only as a creature of the imagination.”

Gonzales rose with uncontrollable feelings, and striking his forehead with his open palm, exclaimed:

“*Heavens!* there are other *dawning* thoughts, that come along with it; turning the brightness into blackness, and the beauty into rottenness and decay.”

“Remember our mother, what is she?”

"A crushed reed, a maniac. O God!" and he groaned in excess of agony.

"Yes, and she says constantly, 'Bring me my child, bring my Estella.'"

"Yes, yes, my sister, I know it," said Gonzales in a subdued tone. "You have dispelled the horror that would fain clothe the past, *all*, because it is *uncertain*, in oblivion."

"Well, then, brother, I have given *you* a lesson;" and she smiled, for she was an angel of mercy, and she knew that a storm had passed over his feelings.

"Yes, I acknowledge, you are *earnest*. I am *impetuous*. May God reward you, sister!"

"Good night, now, good brother, to-morrow we will see;" and thus they parted, the first night of their arrival at Mr. Elliot's.

The next morning, Signora Isabella was sitting in a rocking-chair, reclining back, as if exhausted from mental and physical suffering. Her eyes seemed closed, for the lashes nearly rested on the cheek; but they were looking down upon the kneeling figure at her side. This was Anna, who had one hand in hers, while she gently chafed it with the other.

Anna's figure was still of the petite order: but as perfect in womanhood as it promised in childhood. That same soft, gently-waving line of black hair, as black as a raven's wing, and as soft as silk, formed its beautiful outline around her brow. She still wore a silver comb; but it was more elaborate, of light and beautiful workmanship; and, hanging down low on one side, was a cluster of sweet musk-cluster roses. Her deep blue eyes shadowed forth still that pure inner life; they were edged still with those black, fringe-like lashes. Her complexion was still pure and pale, with the sweet rose-tinge, though every now and then, as she knelt there, it glowed with a brighter hue than the sweet rose which adorned her waist, a gift which she had just accepted from Gonzales Rosco.

He stood, leaning over the back of his sister's chair, his

hand resting on her brow. He passed it again and again over her soft hair, first on one side and then on the other, as if he would charm away the spirit of unrest.

"You see, my friends, what kind ministering spirits I have had around me in your absence," she said, addressing Mr. and Mrs. Elliot, who entered, as if from a walk.

"Yes, and I am very glad to see it," said Mrs. Elliot; "but they went off with such enthusiasm to take a morning walk, I did not know they would return so soon."

"O yes, they left too great an attraction at home, it seems; for here they have been fixtures since their return by my side. Is it not so, pretty one?" she continued, rising up and kissing Anna on her cheek.

"But tell me, my dear friends, what have you seen—what have you observed? and where is that sweet girl?"

This she said with eager animation; but seeing concern depicted on the countenances of Mr. and Mrs. Elliot, she said more quietly:—

"Well, what shall I hear? tell me."

"I thought, Isabella," said Mrs. Elliot, taking her hand, and pressing it to her heart, "that you could bear disappointments?"

"Am I not bearing them *constantly*?" she answered quickly, almost wildly.

Her friends looked at her with deep concern, while her brother said:

"Isabella! shall I give *you* a lesson?" This melted her at once, and bursting into tears, she said:

"Excuse me, my friends; my spirit has been worn out between watching and waiting, between hoping and despairing."

"Mr. and Mrs. Rose have left town, Isabella," said Mrs. Elliot, still holding her hand,— "and have taken Helen with them."

"For how long?"

"For some time."

"Is this a *common* circumstance?"

"It never has been done before."

"It is then *remarkable*, to say the least of it."

"So much so, as to have already excited the village gossip. From the haste and excitement of the departure, they suppose he received a hasty summons."

In the mean time, Gonzalez walked to and fro with hasty steps, his cheeks burning with excitement, and his eyes glowing, as if ready to leap out from a forced retreat.

Where? when? how? this is the language of mind, and of passion, when guided by intellect, in the pursuit of an object.

The whirlwind in its furious passage, shrieks forth, "*anywhere, anyhow*," and plunges headlong, through the homes of innocence and love. The beast of prey, with his carnivorous thirst, roars forth "*anywhere, anyhow*," and crushes and crackles between his massive jaws the flesh and bones of innocence, and laps the warm life-blood, as a delicious draught.

Man alone, in his legitimate sphere, has an eye of reason and a soul of feeling. He requires point, object, and identity; and so it was with Gonzalez. He wandered in a world of uncertainty and doubt; and, as he himself expressed it, mixed with one *damning* thought, that, rather than be true, he would sink it all into the dark gulf of oblivion.

"O sister!" he exclaimed at last, "spare me this agony of thought! Be willing to suspend the recurrence of this subject now. I promise you it shall be pursued:" and he approached his sister's chair, and kneeling at her side, said:

"Will you suspend-it now?"

She laid her hands upon his shoulders, and looking earnestly at him, said:

"Will *you* promise me, in opposition to all the doubts and fears of your own mind, to pursue it *earnestly*?"

He raised his hands, and looking up earnestly towards Heaven, said :

"I promise you, not only in opposition to all my doubts and fears, but in opposition to all my dearest hopes of happiness, to pursue it to the end, whatever that may be."

CHAPTER XVII.

MR. and Mrs. Elliot were well acquainted with all the circumstances in the lives of these young persons, that they have shadowed forth before our minds. Whether it ever would, in the development, take a tangible form, was *then* left in obscurity : but the impetuous ardour of Gonzalez, and the earnest warmth of Isabella, were not more remarkable, than the complete control they exhibited over all their feelings during the rest of their visit.

Miranda's life was now one of routine. The academy bell summoned her at nine, and at two ; but whenever twelve and five returned, the sunbeam darted in again to cheer them all by her bright sallies of mirth. To *Mr.* Gonzalez, she commended herself by the anxiety she manifested to pay off her debts ; and he often protested that she had overpaid him, but that he never meant to give her a receipt in full.

Anna devoted herself particularly to Isabella, and Mr. and Mrs. Elliot charmed them all, by the delightful themes of conversation which they were ever bringing forward, to divert and interest ; and they very truly succeeded : for in these friends there were answering chords, vibrating to the touch of every truthful sentiment.

All the "lions" of the village were explored and talked over—the sequestered grave-yard, and the point—the "fort," and the "old wreck" across the river, that was marked by a

bank of oysters encrusted over the keel; and Mr. Gonzalez laughed heartily at Miranda's ideas of *antiquity*, when she told him it had been there *ever since the Revolution!*

It must be admitted, however (notwithstanding these rays of sunlight), that Mr. Gonzalez was rather sober. Miranda found him very often with his brow bent down upon his palm; and, as she did not know of the circumstances we have mentioned, she bantered him about being in love.

"Yes, I am certainly in love with *you*, Miranda. You have taken such a wonderful leap towards womanhood since I saw you last, that I am *overwhelmed*."

"O, I beg your pardon. I am sure I do not wish to be *dangerous*."

"Well, if I am utterly destroyed, whom shall I blame?"

"O, blame *yourself*, of course. 'To be forewarned is to be forearmed.' Is that not so, mamma?"

"To be sure. I think Signor Gonzalez may consider himself well protected against accidents after this: but Isabella and Anna are waiting to take that walk."

"O, yes," said Miranda; "and I will show you the prettiest jessamine bower that you ever saw. I only wish Harry Cleveland was here now!"

"Well, who is Harry Cleveland? and where is he gone?"

"Well, he was one of the 'big boys' in school, when he left here to live with his uncle in New Orleans."

"And he lives there now, does he?"

"Yes: and we always miss him when we go to the jessamine bower, because his house was right by it; and Harry was always so lively and pleasant."

"Ah, I see how it is! there is no use in my being *overwhelmed* any longer."

"Pshaw, Mr. Gonzalez! you are *very* saucy. But, as you insist *so much* upon being in love, I will test its sincerity with one of our little white tell-tales."

"I do not love tell-tales, because they do not always tell

truth: but what shall I do with this?" he continued, as she handed him a small white flower—star-like—with five points.

"Swallow it whole, without chewing at all; and if it does *not choke* you, your love loves you."

"And if it does, what then?"

"Well then, she does *not* love you."

"Well, if she does not love me, I would rather not be choked for her: and if it should not choke me, it will not tell her how much I love her. Don't you think, Miss Anna, that it would be a very one-sided affair either way?"

But Anna had her head down, looking also for a flower with five points; for they were not easy to find among myriads with four: and when she raised it up, her face was glowing with a bright blush. That blush must have recommended the tell-tale flowers, for Gonzalez Rosco was soon as much absorbed in experimenting with them as any one else.



CHAPTER XVIII.

IN a few days after their visitors had left the village, Mr. and Mrs. Rose returned, and Helen joined the family circle at Mr. Elliot's once more, with the same liberty, with only one exception. She never alluded to Signor and Signora Rosco in the most distant manner; and if they were spoken of, she was silent. It seemed as if she had made a tacit agreement with herself, or that she had entered into some promise, so sacredly did she adhere to the standard of silence. This was the first shadow thrown over their unrestrained intercourse of years, and it was so unlike her artless nature, that it only excited in her kind friends a deeper interest in her.

While seated with them one evening, Mr. Elliot entered with an open letter in his hand, and said:

"Helen, I have a message in this letter to your father, which I wish you would deliver for me."

"I will do so with pleasure, Mr. Elliot: what is it?"

"This is a letter from Harry Cleveland. He has been employed by Havana merchants in New Orleans; but now, they are about transferring him to Havana, and he begs that your father and myself may honour him (this is his own expression) with some letters of introduction." Helen answered quickly,

"O, my dear sir, please say nothing to father about it;" and then checked herself, as if she wished to say nothing more. Mr. Elliot said, rather coldly:

"Well, it is only the message of another. It can remain where it is; but I suppose Harry thought, that among his old friends there, Mr. Rose might give him some useful introductions."

"Is that letter from Harry?" said Miranda, coming up. "And what does he say?"

"Why, Harry is in Havana, and wants some letters of introduction."

"In Havana! why Harry is getting out of the world!"

"O, you are very much mistaken;—Harry is getting into the world; and I think from the tone and style of his letter, he will make a man in it too."

"Let me read it, father, will you? For I cannot believe, that Harry Cleveland is a *man*, and actually gone to live in Cuba?"

"Did you expect Time to fly with *you*, and leave everybody else behind, Miranda?" said Mrs. Elliot.

"O no, I did not expect that; neither did I expect him to take Harry off so far;" and Miranda laughed lightly, and blushed deeply, as Mrs. Elliot looked up from her work at her. I will not say, that her glance was as deeply anxious as it was the night Miranda manifested so much terror when a child; but it was as discriminating. It was a mother's

glance of love: deep down into that artless and congenial nature, which sprang from her own.

Mrs. Elliot then playfully changed the subject, for she thought she saw a tear almost ready to burst forth.

"Just look here," she said, as she hold up her work before her, "please look at the dimensions of this 'robe de chambre,' and tell me who it is for." Miranda partook instantly the spirit of her mother, and stood tip-toeing to her utmost height above the dress.

"Will you see, mamma, I am taller already than this dress; father Time must have put on his 'seven league boots' with me, since you cut it out."

"O, no indeed! I see what you are after," said her mother; "I know you must be tip-toeing. You think, time goes too fast with others, and not fast enough with you, do you?"

"O no, I am perfectly well satisfied, I assure you; I only think he goes too fast, when he carries our friends too far away from us."

"I think, Miranda," said Mrs. Elliot, "Harry would feel quite complimented, to know that you would quarrel with time, because it took him away."

"Perhaps he would, for I hardly think he has forgotten us all in two years; but really, mamma, I begin to feel quite jealous of Cuba."

"Why so?"

"Because it seems to be taking away our choicest friends: for instance, Signor and Signora Rosco, whom we have not seen now for some time."

"And among others, I will send him letters to those very friends, Miranda; for although they live in the country, they may be useful to him sometime or other."

"Yes, father, and give him one to that Spanish gentleman, who used to be with us so much in Washington; and who they say was to be made Governor of Cuba."

"Yes, and something *else* too, one of these days. Did you never suspect, Miranda?"

"Certainly, I said, mamma. You mean that he is to be Signora Isabella's husband, do you not?"

"Yes, but how did you know?"

"From his devotion. I have heard, that 'little pitchers have big ears,' and why should they not have eyes too? Besides, mamma, you look upon me as a mere child still, while some young ladies even confide their secrets to me."

"Ah! you are really becoming much more important than I supposed."



CHAPTER XIX.

HUMAN life passes ever onward: and like a weaver's shuttle, forms a net-work of design and influence. So we proceed from day to day, from year to year; the thread alone is seen, passing swiftly, alas! unheedingly along.

Young life is beautiful to see—fresh bursting buds, with all the dewy influences of the early morn, resting upon their folded beauties—and then comes peeping through upon mankind, the rosy tinted petals. First, the early promised bloom, marked but passive in its leafy covering; then the bud innate with lifelike power, shows first the edge of one bright leaf and then the other; and then, the gently curving petals, one within another, show the full promise of a perfect flower.

Merry voices are heard, and young elastic steps fall joyously on the ear. Our heart beats quick: and our eyes turn with eager expectation to the door of Mr. Elliot's withdrawing-room. There, the associations have been bright and sunny, like youth in its heyday and holiday. The ocean in the far distance looking playful and glad, and the waves near by, ever raising themselves up, as if to kiss the passing breeze.

The sun glancing from wave to wave, from shore to shore, throwing back upon earth, in his descending glory, a glowing tribute of himself.

But here comes youth, happy, joyous, glad youth! Like waves in their gladness, and the sun in his brightness they pass across the picture of life. How joyously they illumine the pages of time, throwing across even the setting of time's sun, long lines of beautiful, radiant, glowing light!

Anna Young, Helen Rose, and Miranda arrived in glee at the top of the stairs.

"Did you know papa had come, Helen?"

"To be sure I did. Do you suppose Mr. Elliot could arrive at home, and his nearest neighbours not know it in five minutes?"

"Well, he has brought us a beautiful glass, and that is the reason why I have dragged you up stairs so soon. Come and see it;" and she danced on before them, to fix the glass for exhibition.

"It is quite a wonderful glass, Helen, even making allowance for Miranda's effervescent nature," said Anna. "Come, take a seat at this window, and you will see everything going on within view, as distinctly as if we were actors in the scene ourselves."

This glass was a reflector, through which everything in view was brought near; and at this time was placed at the back bow window, and opposite the front view, described in a previous chapter.

"O, this is indeed beautiful," said Helen; "your orange trees below look magnificently; even the fences have a refined air. And look, Anna, into our garden, and see my dear mother walking about. It seems, as if we could speak to her."

"Yes, it does almost bring us within touching distance," said Anna. "And look in a different direction. There are some children returning from school over the green; there are also

a cluster of gentlemen at the pump, in council convened, I suppose."

"Contemplating some grand improvement for the public good," said Helen laughing, "such as furnishing the post-boy with a swifter horse. Would you not like that, Anna?" and she looked slyly up into Anna's face, as she stood over her, pointing out the simple beauties of the picture before her.

"I would like it very much," said Anna, "both for the honour of our post, and the public good;" but then she blushed a rosy tint. Her cheeks dimpled on the sides, and her deep blue eyes looked with an earnest loving expression down into the hazel ones of her friend, as she said to her:

"Saucy girl, do you think, I am so very anxious to hear this evening?"

"Certainly I do, my dear. If I had a 'beau fiancé,' as clever as *they say* you have, and as far away, I should feel like turning postmistress myself; and meeting the mail half-way. Indeed, these intolerable eleven miles would be unendurable to my impatient desires."

"I want you to bear in mind, that this is only said; but, if you were expecting to receive his maiden speech, you would be still more anxious. Would you not?"

"O, in that case, I should die of curiosity."

"Not quite," said Anna, "for then you would be sure of never having it gratified. But to change the subject; do look into that glass again. How picturesque those ladies look, as they walk across the green: and those children, playing with that goat, remind me of the puppets that are exhibited in dioramic views. Move your curly head, Miranda."

"Yes, do look at those school-boys, playing with 'old Jim,'" said Miranda, still keeping her curly head there, while the other girls peeped over. "Look at him, do, and see how mad the old fellow is, shaking his head and capering."

"Yes, we see a head full of curls shaking before us," said

Anna, "but they don't look like 'old Jim's;' they are soft and silky, and of a golden hue."

"You are too provokingly kind, my dear aunt," said Miranda. "Why didn't you push my head out of the way, so that you could see old Jim's?" and the lively girl capered off to the window, looking still upon the same soft and lovely landscape. The golden light of the sun rested on the topmost leaves of the trees, and the soft silvery looking clouds at the west, seemed set in a border of gold, scintillating and bright.

"All we want now to complete this view," said Anna, "is a finishing-off of mountain scenery in the back-ground, behind that rich margin of trees beyond the common."

"You never can forget those old Virginia hills of yours," said Helen. "Now, I can look upon that view, and imagine it perfect, knowing as I do, that the eternal ocean is on the other side of us, ever changing, and yet unchangeable in its sublime and majestic beauty."

"Your imagination is free, my dear Helen, because untrammelled by any other association; but if you had been born, as I was, on the mountain side; if you had roamed in childhood by the mountain torrent; and if all the memories of your tenderest years were connected with those associations, you too would love them."

"O Anna," said Helen, "you are too earnest to be joked: and too good to be laughed at. Let us go and sit in the balcony."

"Well, then," said Miranda, "if you are going to talk in the balcony, I know, it will be a long one; for (like the old gentleman who built it), I believe you both consider it a paradise. Now, young ladies, I take after my grandmother: it is no paradise to me, mine must be on a more extended scale."

They both laughed at the girl, as she went with a hop, a skip, and a jump to the door; then turned, and making a low curtsy to them, ran down stairs.

"Sweet creature!" said Helen. "How happy and bright she always seems to be now, Anna!"

"Yes," said Anna, "she has learnt the earliest lessons of life, and is now enjoying the fruits of them in a subdued temper and a self-controlling power." And these two girls walked slowly through the whole length of this long arched room, already described, with their arms entwined around each other: and forming in their appearance a beautiful contrast.

Helen's auburn locks floated gracefully over her shoulders, as they walked against the strong sea-breeze; and her dark soft eyes, although they looked down upon her friend while they walked, seemed from their expression, to be in reality looking up to her, in admiration and the sincerest esteem; for on Anna's whole appearance, there was an unmistakable impression—as if stereotyped by the divine mind—of character formed on the exalted basis of conscience.

It perhaps gave to a mere observer too great an idea of uniformity, to allow her to be properly appreciated; for even in her appearance, there was a minute propriety, which to many would seem only the result of fixed rules. *Her* pins never fell out. Her ribbons were never disarranged. Every hair stayed in its place, among the smooth rolls or plaits; and as to her dresses, they were always neat, tasteful, and becoming, although invariably arranged by her own fair little hands.

"And now, dear Anna, I want to hear more about this maiden-speech. Is it really so, that Adonis Joyce is already admitted to the bar?"

"Yes, it is even so, and he has delivered a speech which has received some very unexpected eulogiums. He promises to send it to us, if we will discuss and settle its merits, before he returns from his travel south, as he says, that he is already very tired of it."

"Do tell me, Anna," said Helen, "is he as reserved and silent, as he used to be? For you know, I have not seen him since Mrs. Elliot came here as a bride, when I was quite

young." And here the inquisitive girl gave way to an unconquerable and merry laugh, that sounded joyously, as its echoes floated on the sweet evening air; then as it died away, the merry peal again rose clear and joyous; and she threw herself almost exhausted, on one of the benches in the balcony.

"*What on earth* is the matter, my dear Helen? What link can there be in your memory, to excite such mirth?"

"O!" said Helen, "I shall never forget while *I live*, Adonis Joyce."

"Well, now you must tell me why?"

"Well, I was only a small girl when he was here," said Helen; "and though he was so much older and larger than myself, I admired the handsome, sedate boy very much. In vain, however, I tried to attract his attention, and draw him from his reserve. I handed him my books, my slate, my fruit; and he received them all as tributes from an inferior. I looked slyly at *him*, but he never designed to look at me *at all*. Indeed, so far from getting him into a sociable humour, he always kept aloof; till one day, we all went down to the water's edge to crab. I stood beyond the largest cannon mound you see there," and as she said this, she knelt on the wide bench and pointed down towards the river. "The water was washing around it then, over the green grass, as it is now; and even covered the large ballast rocks, that we children," and she patted her friend's cheek and kissed it, "have so often speculated about."

"But you have forgotten Adonis Joyce," said Anna.

"Well, you have remembered him for me, Anna; but would you believe it? though it was the last evening he was to be here, and he only standing a few feet from me, he would say *not one* word. But there he stood, skimming oyster-shells over the water, while my poor *girl's tongue* was most impatient to be set free."

"Poor girl! what did you do then?"

"Well, I commenced a conversation with him. I said,

'Adonis, you can't catch crabs with an oyster-shell.' He seemed surprised at my assurance; and then said, turning half away at the time, 'No, and you can't either.' 'Yes, I can,' I said, 'and I will show you; Old Coco showed me.' 'Old Coco, who is Old Coco?' said Adonis. 'He fishes and sews,' I said. The ice was completely broken then, and the silent boy laughed so long and so loud, that the whole family gathered round, to see what had wrought such a miracle. But, notwithstanding this, Adonis was now fairly started, and he must see me catch crabs with an oyster-shell. So, I tied my line to the boat post, and taking the thin white shells, one after another as he handed them to me; I tipped them over the water, sometimes a half dozen times, before they would fall in. You know, every *tip* is called a crab, in the childish vocabulary of our darling village."

"Well, go on, dear Helen: I am quite interested in your narrative."

"In the mean time," resumed Helen, "my poor bait was nearly eaten off by a score of ravenous real crabs; and when I turned to examine it, Adonis was with me, and was quite attentive to my interests. There we found old carbuncled veterans, smooth, bright-shelled matrons, and tiny, delicate little chits of crabs, that looked nearly transparent through their soft shells; all enjoying a merry reunion at my expense. 'This must not be,' I said; 'you must pay for your fare: and leave one as hostage.'" But they all soon slipped away into deep water, excepting the old veteran, who was no doubt short-sighted, as his eyes had lost the full, round, bright aspect of the young crab. In my anxiety to secure him, I looked around for a net, but could see none. 'Do, Adonis,' I said, as I very cautiously drew in the line as far as I could, 'hold this line for me, just as it is, till I seize him by the claw; I am determined he shall pay for his fare.' 'No, Helen,' said Adonis, let *me* seize him: I can catch a crab as well as you can, I expect.' So saying, he seized him by one claw, and brought

him out dripping with the clear brine; but no sooner was he out of his native element, than he in turn seized Adonis with the other claw;" and the merry-hearted girl laughed again, at the childish recollection.

"This is the scene," she continued, "which always excites my mirth, for Adonis was too courageous to throw it down; and not wise enough to hold both claws, and fin it, as you and I would do, my darling."

"How was he relieved from the dilemma?" said Anna, joining in the laugh.

"O, I went to his assistance," said Helen, "for you knew, I have always been an adept in the art of crab catching."

"You were decidedly the hero of the scene, Helen."

"Undoubtedly; Adonis himself acknowledged that I knew more about catching crabs in every way, than he did; and I believe the poor fellow looked half conscious of being drawn into an awkward scrape."

"Is this the most vivid recollection you have of Adonis Joyce?"

"Yes, it is," said Helen, "the party he came with left the next morning; and I have often wondered, what kind of man such a boy would make."

"Well," said Anna, "I will tell you something of his character. He is still singularly abrupt sometimes, even at the risk of his character for politeness. For instance, I heard him ask a young lady one evening to play on the piano; and after she had played a short time, he very quietly told her, 'that was enough.'"

"Oh, the brute!" said Helen; "he must be devoid of sensibility."

"There you are wrong," said Anna, "for I have had the best opportunities of seeing it tested. His father, who lived near us in Virginia, became a widower, when Adonis and his sister Ella were quite young; and in a short time married a lady, who did not prove worthy of the trust of stepmother.

She treated them not harshly, but *worse* than that. There was a daily, hourly iceberg closing around them, and separating them from all they loved best on earth. A serpent's coil, whose folds were cold and lifeless, was their only place of rest, and if they dared to watch for one look of warm approving love, the serpent's head was raised to check it."

"O, dreadful!" said Helen, "what did they do?"

"What *could* they do?" said Anna. "Adonis steeled his heart against all the world, save Ella; and she drooped like a crushed flower, and died."

"Poor Adonis Joyce," said Helen; "I can never laugh at you again! Please, tell me more of them, dear Anna."

"I will do so at some other time, dear Helen, when we shall have more leisure; and then also, I will read to you a few extracts from Ella's journal, which I have. Now, you see, the 'silver moon is in the sky,' and you remember, we have promised to let the 'big boys' row us around the Island of Marsh this evening."

"And that reminds me," said Helen, "that I must run over home, and ask mother if I may go; for you know, I am not yet out of leading strings."

"May you never feel the loss of a mother's guidance, my dear Helen!" said Anna; and they both walked through the long room, with the bright moon, which was still low in the east, streaming in through the front bow window. The back was thrown in shadow, with the clear sky and the stars twinkling faintly; and neighbouring houses lit up for the evening, looking cheerfully, and bringing up before the mind,—domestic enjoyment and social comfort.

CHAPTER XX.

THE "Old Fort" was situated at the head of the inlet, with a wide sheet of water, extending in a straight view to the ocean, a distance of ten miles. To the left, the waters gracefully turned, and washing the bluff of the little village, swept in an immense body around a wide curve to the interior; and ever could be seen upon its wide blue bosom, the narrow strip of marsh, either surrounded with its dark blue border at the neap tides, or seeming to float in graceful beauty on the spring tides.

This fort enclosed three or four acres of land, surrounded with a deep moat, which could have held, even at this time, several feet of water.

There was a terrace around it, on a level with the outer bank, wide enough for a walk, while above that was raised another bank, several feet high, and shelving on each side. This was evidently the place where the great guns were once mounted, though at present they lay half-buried in the loose, coarse sand of the interior of the fort. Cannon were scattered about, of various sizes, but most of them very large. Some were spiked, while others were filled to the very muzzle with either coarse sand or cannon balls, rolled into them by the children of the village—for at one time, before the sand had made such inroads, they lay about in great abundance.

At this time the fort had grown up, on the western side, in an extensive plum orchard, which completely overshadowed the terrace, and made a very attractive walk, particularly in plum season, for the children. The moat had also grown up on that side, with a quantity of the sea-willow, a graceful shrub, with light green tapering leaves. This was owing to the moat being deeper on that side, and being most sheltered from the encroachments of the sand, it always contained water; while on the eastern side it was partially filled, and always remained dry.

The eastern side was the favourite of our two girls, Helen and Anna, who have walked there this afternoon. The whole of that side—moat, terrace, and bank—were all covered with a rich carpet of grass, which had not yet suffered from the inroads of those scourges of low country, feet cockspurs and crow-claws. They took their seats on the terrace, in the shadow of the bank, with the blue water dancing before them in a long unbroken vista till it met the sky. The sea-breeze kissed their cheeks, as it flew ever by, with a sweet, fresh, murmuring sound. The distant homes of friends, in the reflected light of the western sky, lay in bold relief to the right and the left across the waters, and added to them, the “retreat” of their pastor—with respect be his name spoken—which was hid from the village by the envious, but beautiful, “point of pines.”

These girls had walked out this afternoon for a special purpose—that of communing, without interruption, upon an interesting subject. They had walked up the long, grassy street, under the shade of wide-spreading “Pride of Indias,” now loaded with large clusters of yellow berries, and leaves fast fading into the autumnal tint. They had passed the village houses, and still the wide, green street extended on before them, till crossed by a neat paling with a gate. Through this they passed, and followed a winding path till they reached the fort. There was not now, as formerly, an imposing draw-bridge and portcullis there, with its sentinel straight and stiff, and once so imposing to a childish mind—no soldiers drawn up within—no burnished arms—no outspread tent, with officers clothed in brief authority; but the stamp of desertion and repose had settled upon this once active scene. Rabbits jumped into their coverts under the willow bushes; and the little birds chirped in the plum-trees above, as they crossed the moat, and walked up the bank, by a diagonal path, formed by long use and the drifting sand, and pursued their walk around the grassy terrace to their favourite seat.

"Ella Joyce must have been beautiful," said Helen. "With such a sweet spirit as you describe, I cannot imagine her to be otherwise."

"That rule of yours will only apply to the imagination, dear Helen," said Anna. "In practical life, we see that goodness and beauty are not necessarily united; but I must confess that genuine goodness of heart stamps the countenance with a certain charm, that the congenial and intimate spirit must generally appreciate. It was decidedly so in this case. Most persons thought Ella extremely plain; others imagined her stupid. Yet to me her sweet face was always interesting; and the beauties of her mind, which she never unfolded to others, were never hid from me. But I will proceed with her short, sad story. Her feelings were crushed by the influence of one who should have been to her a mother! Her father was not only worldly-minded, but was devoted, either to business or the gratification of his social pleasures—despising, as he often said, 'little matters!' His second marriage was one purely of convenience; though, judging from Mrs. Joyce's appearance, one might have supposed *love* to be the ruling passion. She was a real 'Virginia housekeeper!' so far as high living, good cooking, and an abundant table went; and if these were made the crowning virtues of character, she was indeed unexceptionable. There was, however, a depth beneath the surface, which only those were aware of who were carried along in its cold, dark under-current. Poor Ella felt its chilling influences always, but, like a true-hearted child, she hid it all within her own bosom. Well do I remember one day that I dined there, with a large, merry party. We were ushered into the dining-room soon after we entered, and before I had time to seek for Ella; but taking an early opportunity at table, I asked 'if Ella was absent from home?'

"'No; she is at home,' said Mrs. Joyce; 'but she wished to be excused. She *says* she's not well.'"

"'Who is that?' asked Mr. Joyce.

" 'Ella,' said Mrs. Joyce, in a very quiet tone, and looking down into her plate.

" 'That girl is fanciful and obstinate,' said Mr. Joyce; 'I wish you would teach her some of *your courtesy*, Mrs. Joyce.'

" Mrs. Joyce's face here brightened up with the blindest and most complacent smile imaginable, as she said, 'I will do anything *possible*, Mr. Joyce.'

" 'I met her this morning in the grounds,' said Mr. Joyce, 'looking as well and as silent as usual, so I think she must be *mistaken* about her health. I think I heard you say that she complained sometimes?'

" 'O, yes, she often *complains*,' said Mrs. Joyce, with a peculiar emphasis of double meaning on the last word.

" He looked annoyed for a moment, while she turned with perfect self-composure, and talked to a gossiping neighbour on her right, no doubt instilling, by some half-implied insinuations, some new slander for diffusion. The glass, the toast, the jest, and the merry laugh, circulated again around the table, but my thoughts clung to the absent girl. It seemed that for one moment I had a glance, deep, down beneath the flood, of a sunken form and a dejected eye, of one borne down by the upward pressure, and hurrying on to destruction; but another glance at Mrs. Joyce's composed and handsome face, dispelled for a time the sudden vision, for there was within *her* eye the fascination of a *serpent*. Soon as we rose from the table, when I knew that Mrs. Joyce would be busy, I sought Ella's room, but she was absent. I then went to the private staircase, and, on the landing-place, met her, looking very tired, with a housekeeper's apron on, as if she had just left the pantry.

" 'My dear Ella,' I said, 'I am *surprised* to see you here. I heard you were not well enough to be at table.'

" 'To whom did my mother tell that?' said Ella.

" 'To your father, and all the company.'

" 'Anna,' said Ella, in an indignant tone, 'I was not too

sick to be at table; but I stayed away to please Mrs. Joyce, and because she said my father was angry with me. She told it to me this morning with a heartless tone, and then told me to go and 'think about it.' I rushed out, blind and miserable, into the grounds. There I met my father, who recognised me *without a smile!* I, shocked and agitated by past emotion, merely bowed my head, and passed by, bearing with me only the dreadful consciousness that we have become *strangers!* The poor girl looked up and clasped her hands, and said—'O, God, forgive me all my hard thoughts, and take me out of everybody's way!'

"This was the only glimpse she ever gave me into the secret of her life. I went with her to her room door; but from there she hurried me nervously away, saying, 'Go, dear Anna; I believe you love me—but I must be *alone* now.'"

"Sad, indeed, was her voice, and sad to me has ever been the remembrance of that day. I came south with sister, a few days after, and months passed away before I returned to my native Virginia hills. As soon as I did, I inquired about Ella, and was told that she secluded herself a great deal, and that she was not well. The old vision of the deep flood rushed over my mind, and I hurried to her. When I arrived, I heard that Mr. and Mrs. Joyce had gone to the city, and were not expected back for several days. I met at the door Ella's old nurse, who for a time had been thrust from the establishment, and I inquired for her.

"'I am very happy to see you, my dear Miss Young,' said the old lady; 'My bird,' as she always called her—and now with her apron to her eyes—'is almost ready to fly away!'

"'What do you mean, my dear Aunt Judy?' I said.

"'I mean,' she said, almost convulsively, 'that she is going to die, and leave us all!' and the poor creature sobbed as if her heart would break.

"I left her to quell her grief, and hurried through the house to Ella's room; but it was desolate. Stillness and

desertion reigned now, where I had never witnessed anything but mirth and hilarity: and in the suspense of those few moments, it seemed as if the solemnity of the grave rested on the whole mansion. I sought her in every room on the first and second floor without success, and for a moment I was at a loss what to think, when I heard the plaintive notes of a mourning dove. This I knew was Ella's favourite pet, and following the sound, I went up a steep staircase, to a room in the attic. This was the only room in the roof, and shelved towards the four sides, with a large dormant window in each side. It was neatly plastered, and though everything looked plain, perfect neatness and an air of refinement and repose pervaded it. One of the windows commanded a splendid mountain view, and in its deep recess was a very small stand, with writing materials and a chair; never, however, to be again used by Ella.

"When I entered, she extended her hand, and smiled, saying,—

" 'This is kind, dear Anna. I thought God was very good in giving me quiet now; but I was just dreaming of you, Anna, and woke, wishing that I could hold your soft little hand, as I pass over the dark river.'

" 'Oh, do not talk such sad things, dear Ella!' I said; 'perhaps you will soon feel better.'

" 'Never in this world, dear friend,' said Ella.

" 'But I will hurry on, dear Helen.

"A few days after, the sinking sun streamed through the room, and the long straggling rays fell across the feet of the sleeping girl. Aunt Judy and I were both struck with the pale languor of her countenance. She nervously seized the tumbler of wine- whey, and standing over her, said—

" 'My sweet bird, take this for Aunt Judy.'

" 'O, Aunt,' she said, looking up, 'Why did you wake me? I saw Adonis here at my side!'

"Just then we heard the sound of hurrying feet, which

threw her into a state of great agitation. The next moment Adonis was kneeling at her side, and pressing to his bosom his 'darling, darling sister.' She clasped him in her arms, and breathed her last upon his bosom, without saying *one word*." And the dear girl wept bitterly at the remembrance of that overwhelming scene of sorrow.

There was nothing now in the view before them to soothe the grief of those two kindred spirits, who wept a silent tribute to that broken heart.

CHAPTER XXI.

WHEN the heart has been excited by any class of emotions, into a torrent of feeling, we see action necessary to its relief. It is just as if the quicksand stream of life, called more abundantly forth from its secret fountain, needed the ready aid of all its tributaries, to bring it again to a calm and equal throb.

Action is expressively the language of the mind! Thus we see the extended arms of welcome—the laugh of joy—the tears and convulsive sobs of sorrow: and that impetus to motion, which is always exhibited under the excitement of strong grief.

Anna's narrative seemed to call up the scene before her in all its vivid reality; while Helen's sympathetic nature was melted by the touching tale!

They rose up and resumed their walk. Passing from the "old fort" by the same path, they turned to the left, towards a margin of woods. This skirted the bluff, which near by formed a cove, washed by a creek, now filling with the swelling tide. Pole Hall is a place as well known to the bathers of this village, as Cape May or Nahant is to the surf lovers of the north: and, indeed, it is a sweet retired nook, with fine shade trees, and a pretty shelving bluff—the scene of many a

schoolboy's adventure, for it was only to them so familiarly known. The girls pursued their walk in silence, and passing by Pole Hall some distance, they came into the Island road, where they turned again towards home, reminded by the lengthening shadows, that the coming twilight was not very far off.

"Never will I forget that evening," said Anna, resuming again the conversation that had been interrupted by deep feeling.

"Never can I forget that evening, when Ella expired on her brother's bosom—her eyes beaming one moment upon him, in love's deep, confiding language—then closing for ever upon all the world. The frantic agony of that brother, for a time was heart-rending; and then the settled gloom was oppressive!

"Mr. and Mrs. Joyce were also there, for they had unexpectedly met Adonis in the city; and they had returned together. *He*, tortured by remorseful anguish, reproached her for his ignorance—while she, pale with conviction—struggled for justification. Their criminations and recriminations in that sacred and solemn place, sounded like the wailings of lost spirits, rudely thrust into the region of the pure and blest. But as she had sought comfort and repose above them in life—so now, in death, she had entered into that sanctuary of the spirit, which was not only out of their reach, but beyond even their conceptions. I verily believe she despised me ever afterwards, for daring to soothe Ella's last moments by my presence! And now, Helen, let us sit on this grassy bank, in sight of home, and, while we have light enough, I will read some extracts from Ella's journal.

"Feb. 18.—Returned from school with bright anticipations of a happy home—hoping for love—a love which I have only known in idea. My father has never written me, in all the long years I have been away! *She* has had everything to do with me, and for me, as if she alone were my guardian. I

have sent him notes enclosed in my letters to her, filled with expressions of tender affection—hoping, like a caged bird, that the hour might come for my release. I feel great doubt in my mind whether he ever received them—for he said to me, with a frown, to-day—‘there is one important branch you know nothing of, and that is letter-writing.’ This presents to a hoping, confiding child, a dreadful picture either way. If he did not receive them, he must think me heartless: and if he did, he must have thought them very worthless. The worst of it is, there can be no explanations—for, should I feel courage enough to speak, I find *her* eyes are on me, and I am in a moment hushed. There is certainly a most singular influence about those eyes—their cunning, and determination to overpower me—let me seek rest in ‘nature’s sweet restorer.’ Good night, thought.”

“July 18.—One, whom I once esteemed a dear friend, is here. What shall I think of her coldness to me, and her devotion to one who assumes all the *authority*, without the love of a mother!

“She, perhaps, has been induced to believe me unworthy of her friendship. Well, let it be so. I will bury the most precious love of past years. Mother! sweet, but desecrated word from my lips! never known but in connexion with distrust! Father! oh, how I would love you, could I but reach you over the mountain which separates us! *She* fills thy soul—for thy soul seeks but the gratification of sensual desires. *She* gratifies thy taste through the unknown, perhaps, uncared for drudgery of thy child; and then claims the merit before her, with an unblushing cheek.

“O, woman! under what guise is it, that thy truthfulness serves thee such false tricks.”

“Sept. 18.—I am most singularly and carefully separated from my father—always either requested or commanded out on business when he is in. He scarcely ever speaks to me pleasantly—never playfully, as he often does to other young

ladies. *She* says, he thinks me '*very plain*, and that my manners have disappointed him *very much*.' These second-hand speeches are very cutting—indeed, worse than cutting—they pass into the soul with a rough edge. They are like the fangs of a serpent, poisoned for that very purpose. Oh, what a chill passes over me! Surely this is a mildew and blight, falling upon the spirit of my life!"

"Dec. 18.—'Hope deferred maketh the heart sick!' One year has nearly passed since I have borne this life within death—this death within life. A soulless life, and a hopeless death—a life without spirit and a death without release! How can I define my situation? I only feel that the coils of a cruel destiny are encircling me, and that I have no power to resist! My internal and external nature are not adapted to each other. My mind has the quickest perception of a hidden meaning, yet, my physical nature is not equal to opposition. My pride, also, is opposed to saying, 'You suspect me;' because that would be indirectly allowing that there was some ground for suspicion! Acknowledge to your own heart, Ella, would you not rather go down in silence to the tomb, than give her the triumph of discomposing you by her chicanery? Pride, Ella, has had some agency in separating you from the earthly heaven of a peaceful spirit; examine thyself."

"Feb. 18.—One year to-day, since I have been at home, and Adonis not returned yet! I write and receive no answers; and I hear nothing said of him, but with half-implied accusations! I will not believe that my brother is undeserving of my love! We are but *two*, tossed on the same rough ocean—beat about by the same billows! Would that we were together, and could find some sunny isle, amid the briny wave, to rest our spirits on!"

"July 18.—Hope attends man, they say, to the portals of eternity, then leaves him to fruition. I feel sensibly that my hope is fading away; a sinking at the heart, a fainting of the spirit within, and a prostration of all my physical powers, I

feel creeping over me, with greater and greater force. To-day, I have been taught to feel that I am alone—all alone in the world. Anna Young, is, I think, sincere in her interest for me. Her eyes were full of compassion when she came to my room door with me: but still she does not know the depth of that deceitful nature! Her pure and guileless spirit can neither conceive of one delighting in paltry manoeuvre, or of an innocent being yielding and bowing before its influence. Ah, she has driven the iron into a tender heart, with an unerring and relentless hand. My pen shall never descend to the miserable items; but they write themselves on my brain with fire; with fire that will destroy me, for it burns even in the quiet hours of night. Sleep, now, is not often a 'sweet restorer;' the visions of the night bring no relief."

"Twelve o'clock at night.—Occupation brings some relief from thought; my brain echoes to every sound, and my heart throbs in sympathy with every rush of feeling. I must become a recluse, not from sullen selfishness, the alleged motive, but that I may acquire and maintain a calm spirit, an inward consciousness of good intentions towards all, will support me. I feel that even for *her* pleasure, I would willingly sacrifice much comfort, if I could any longer be useful; but these faintings are annoying to her, and might, she thinks, win sympathy. Thus, she tells me that my father '*despises scenes*,' and that I had better keep my room when I feel weak!"

"Dec. 18.—Two years have nearly passed away, and hope is dead. Yes, earthly hope is entirely resigned. God is good! He leads me by his spirit, into paths of peace; He teaches me submission to this rod that has been laid upon me; He gives me the consolations of His grace, so that I can lean upon Him, as I pass on towards the dark valley. I feel the mists settling on my spirit, as they rest on the valleys, in the early morning light! They are dissipated by the noon-tide sun, and so it

will be with me! The Sun of Righteousness, when he rises on my soul in eternity, will dispel these mists which shadow my earthly life: and all will be bright in His presence! Let us not desire to linger here, O, my spirit! But let us desire to go away and be at rest for ever! Like the dove which flies to the rock for shelter amid the storms, I have retreated from the busy scenes below. A distant murmur only, breaks upon my ear. Aunt Judy is kind to her 'bird,' as she always calls me; and my sweet little mourning dove soothes my soul, with her sad, sympathetic notes."

"Feb. 18.—Two years have rolled away since I commenced this era of my life. Viewed from earth, dark shadows rest upon them. The diverging influence of my being has ever held me off from the centre of my desires, till I have reached beyond the outer verge of mercy or regard; remembrance never rises to this solitary room. All is quiet below! *She* came up yesterday, stood by my chair for a few moments, and said they 'were going to the city.' I said

"'I wish I could see my father, as I am afraid I shall never see him again.'

"'Pooh, nonsense, you will be well enough when we go away; and *he* knows it too.'

"'Then you both know more than I do,' I said.

"*She* flirited off with a shrug of her shoulder. My father, my own dear father, I will still call him, this morning stood at the bottom of the stair! my heart fluttered to meet him, hoping that he would ascend. But no—

"'Good-bye, Miss Ella; if you cannot come down to see me, I will not go up to see you.'

"These were his parting words, and they sound in my ears still; the knell of earthly hope, of all earthly expectation. I am weak, too weak to write. I shall lie down and perhaps dream of happiness, that happiness which awaits me beyond the dark river."

"This was," said Anna, "the last entry Ella ever made in her journal, for I arrived that day, and the rest you know."

The girls resumed their walk home, for the shades of evening were gathering thickly around them. No moon shed its silvery light upon their path, and, as if in sympathy with sad thought, large fleecy clouds increased the deepening shadows. How fortunate it is, that fitting hours as they hasten by, bear not the same impressions to all minds! The schoolboys are hastening home from their evening sports, and the joyful whistle, or the merry laugh, indicate plainly that no shadows rest upon their spirits. Happy-faced girls, also, are wending their way homeward; and separating at the different houses as they pass, receive the affectionate farewell of their young companions.

Before Helen and Anna arrived at home, the lights brightened up, one after another, from different houses, seen across the common. The village church was well defined amid the scene; and its tapering spire seemed, to the highly excited feelings of the girls, to point heavenward, where Ella's spirit was at rest.

They parted for the night at Mr. Rose's door: Anna, to dwell on the experiences of the past, and to feel the consciousness in her own mind, of its benefits; Helen, to wonder at her own past happy life, and to feel, for the first time, that the bitter cup of experience was at her own lips.



CHAPTER XXII.

Mr. and Mrs. Rose were strongly contrasted. He was a large, dark-complexioned, severe-looking man; she a fair, gentle, placid-looking woman. She had been a beautiful Bernudian girl: the admiration of all who saw her, and the most

attractive belle of the island on which she lived. Of course, she had many suitors, but of all who tried to win her, no one was so favourably looked upon as the dark-visaged, stern-eyed Cuban.

He was a widower, with one child—the charming Helen—whom he seemed to watch over with an ever-protecting love, only willingly confiding her to the care of Miss Helen Munro, with whom sometimes he would leave her for a whole day; thus, there was a very strong attachment formed between them; and they were both fair and beautiful. Indeed, they were so much alike, they might have been taken for mother and daughter.

They were also similar in their tastes, and it was interesting to see them walking for hours on the sea-beach, either picking up shells, or chasing the receding billows; the elder Ellen always protecting the younger from venturing too far. Then, when tired, they would seek some low rock, and the little child, with her innocent prattle, would tell, in a dreamy way, of a “pretty mamma she had once, that used to lead her to the sea-shore, and pick up shells for her; and then *this* papa brought her in a vessel to Bermuda.”

Miss Munro became Mrs. Rose, and not long after, they removed to Georgia, and settled in this retired village. They purchased a plantation in the neighbourhood, and adding another to the small cluster of village houses, represented largely the hospitalities of the place. Indeed, if possible, they seemed to bring with them from a warmer clime, a more wide-extended scale of social feeling; for, whether to their neighbours, or those who came from abroad, they always gave the warmest welcome of an ever-abounding hospitality.

Yet it seemed as if, though they were always dispensing pleasure with a munificent hand to others, they were themselves ever to be denied the pleasure of a complete family circle. They had three children, who only lived to be a few years old—then died.

This, to Mrs. Rose, was a sad affliction, indeed; and it added to her usually placid countenance an expression of subdued grief. It seemed as if she had, in opposition to every impulse of tender love, and every throb of her sympathetic heart, bent her will to say, "Thy will, O, God, be done!" And then it drew her nearer in her love to Helen, who so often had been left her all in all—the adopted, lovely, and trusting child of her affections.

Over Mr. Rose, these sad events cast a different spell. He became prouder and sterner. The cloud deepened on his brow; his eye, that once brightened at the very sight of children, now turned coldly on them, as they sported before and around his dwelling. Helen's buoyant step and sunny eye, that once, he said, always reminded him of the green, bright slopes of Cuba, had now lost more than half their charm. If she had not possessed a guileless, unsuspecting nature, she might have often thought he wished to cast her from his affections, for often, when she caressed him with a daughter's love, he would hold her in his trembling arms a moment, and then leave her with an agitated and hurried excuse.

Mr. Rose, though perceptibly changed to those around him, still entertained company on a liberal scale; and in the course of years his large, commodious house had received many a party of pleasure, arriving both by sea and land. Sometimes the simpler portion of the villagers gazed in wonder at the fashionable visitors, as they promenaded up and down the almost grass-covered streets, and in that way *only* caught a glimpse of the outer world.

Never, since the days of its by-gone prosperity, had this little village ever known a public-house. Strangers were always received with a warm home feeling, and the best cheer they had set before them, with a cordial welcome. The school-children, also, always welcomed any fresh arrival to this

quiet spot with enthusiasm, as something to break in upon the quiet routine of every-day life. The "big road," which entered the village opposite to the island road, was witness to many a cluster of walking school-girls, after school in the afternoon, particularly when any of the inhabitants were known to expect visitors. Then, when the carriages or carriage came in view, there was a curious combination of eyes, ears, and tongues; and then, as they drove by, there was an involuntary *hush*, and drawing down of the "cracker-bonnets" over their faces, unless they happened to be acquaintances.

One afternoon—but not this afternoon—two open phaetons drove in sight, drawn by splendid bays, with every accompaniment of style and fashion. In each were a gentleman and lady—in one a newly married pair; in the other betrothed lovers.

They had come some distance from the up-country, to visit the childhood's home of the wife. With how much interest was *this* individual looked upon by the wondering eyes of simple village school-girls! How radiantly beautiful she seemed in her bridal travelling attire! and as her eyes beamed upon them in passing, with the love and remembrance of the olden time, the heart of the young beat with delight at the idea of being recognised again by one who had been out in the gay, bright world, where there was so much to attract, and so much to call off the mind from the simple pleasures of youth.

But this is only one of the pageants of the mind; a reminiscence that forces itself forward from the shadowy past!

This afternoon, before Helen's return home, a traveller passing through the village had craved a night's hospitality from Mr. Rose. He was a plain-looking man, of middle size, very active—judging from his quick, light step. His complexion was thick and yellow, giving that deeply bilious tinge, inherent in those who have been born and reared amid the miasma of swamps. His eye, however, was bright and clear, and redeemed his mental powers from any supposition of

disease; for they shone out with a light both sparkling and shrewd.

He entered into conversation with Mr. and Mrs. Rose, with the ease of one whose business it had been to mingle with strangers. He narrated many adventures of his in the far west of the states, at a time when "lynch law" was estimated as the "higher law," ruling above conscience, morality, or religion. His off-hand, easy style of conversation, often introducing his own personal escapes and perils, had unbent Mr. Rose's usual reserve; and Mrs. Rose's countenance was animated with the most lively interest, on account of the influence she saw it have upon her husband.

Helen's countenance, always beautiful, glowed with a softer light than usual this evening—the effect of the touching narrative of Ella Joyce, which she had just heard from Anna. She had felt, with gratitude filling her heart, how different *her* situation had been from Ella's; and the love she bore her mother leaped out more joyously from its deep fountain.

Mrs. Rose, who heard her light step on the piazza, received Helen's embrace at the room door; and a "dear, dear mother," was heard, expressive of her deep affection. They entered together. Helen spoke to her father, and bowed to the stranger.

"My name is Mr. Poor," said the stranger; "a very unpretending one, miss,"—and, looking intently at Mr. Rose, said, with emphasis, "Your wife and daughter are very much alike, sir."

The glance of his shrewd eye was scrutinizing, and seemed to call up some unpleasant and forbidden image from the past, for Mr. Rose's proud, stern eye fell beneath his fixed and penetrating gaze. The stranger, on the contrary, seemed so well pleased with the revealings of that moment, that he turned with renewed zest to the task of entertaining Helen, to whom he addressed himself in the most amusing manner, seeming to revel in the luxury of having a new listener. He

told her that he was an old traveller, and had become quite an egotist, from having had so much more experience than many he met with.

"Indeed, my dear miss, if all I have heard and seen could be written in a book, it would make a large volume of strange things, I assure you."

"Why do you not write your travels, then?" said Helen. "This is the age for everybody who *can*, to write, and those who *cannot*, to try?"

"I shall class among the *cannots* for a while yet," said he; "at any rate, until I get to the end of my travels. The truth is, I am of a very singular disposition; perhaps such a one as you never met with in your short life."

"What kind is that?" said Helen, amused at the singular turn the conversation was taking.

"A very restless one, miss. Being a citizen of the world, and free from every tie myself, I feel an uncontrollable desire to meddle in everybody else's business."

"I should think you would find that very dangerous business sometimes," said Helen, smiling; "and that it might gain you the character of being very mischievous."

"That remark calls to mind some of my adventures in the island of Cuba."

"O, do tell them to us," said Helen.

"Certainly I will, if you like. Once, when on a voyage between South America and the United States, we stopped for a few days on the south-eastern coast of Cuba. I went, one day, on a roving expedition into the island, enjoying to the full, as I always do, the beauties of nature. I passed through plantations of the coffee plant, loaded with its dark brown berries, almost ready to be shaken off. Cotton branching with all the luxuriance of an indigenous plant, covered with flowers and fruit, in various stages of progress. The bud just bursting from its green envelope; the full expanded yellow flower, with its purple centre laden with the ever productive

farina; the small, green pod, marked with the semblance of sutures; and the hard, brown, open case, with the snowy tribute of the important vegetable depending from it in a long floating mass.

"There I saw also, long fields of the sugar-cane growing in the jungles and low meadow land, waving gracefully in the breeze which came in fresh from the ocean. Here I reached the foot of a mountain, which runs towards the sea, seeming to be one of those mysterious chains which link the land above the water to the land below the water—disappearing in the fathomless depths for a time, and then appearing again and again, with the tribute to the land of an island, borne upon a rugged peak. Excuse me, miss, if I tire you."

"O, you do not tire me at all, I assure you," said Helen, with a deeply interested countenance.

"Well, I went on, interested in all I saw," said Mr. Poor. "The beautiful, rich plumage of the birds delighted my love of the beautiful. The macaw and other birds arrayed the groves in the liveliest tints of the rainbow. The gay little parroquets lit in myriads on the cane, sprinkling the solid green with a thousand brilliant hues; and, bending them down by their numbers, they swung to and fro, as lively and chattering as children at play."

"And you did not shoot at them, did you?" said Helen.

"O, no," said the stranger, smiling to see her so thoroughly interested.

"I did not shoot them; I only enjoyed their happiness, and noted them down in my memory. But I have not come to the best part of my adventure. I ascended the first slope of the mountain, and came to a piece of table-land, where grew some very fine cocoanut-trees. These were cultivated for the fruit; while at the background, and at the foot of the next slope of the mountain, was a thick grove of the natural growth of forest trees. On the branches of these trees, I detected some monkeys; and was at the moment possessed with an

uncontrollable desire of amusing myself at their expense. Several unripe cocoas I found lying under the trees. I took them up, tore down the fibrous covering from the bud end of them, and with my large pocket-knife cut a hole in them, large enough for a monkey's hand to get in. These I threw down impatiently, as if dissatisfied with them, and without looking towards the grove, turned and walked back, till a tree hid me from view. Behind this I watched their movements. The eager monkeys came, one after another, to seize upon the rejected fruit. One little monkey, more venturesome than the rest, came nearest to the path I had taken, and, securing a nut, looked with curious eyes into the cavity I had made. He at last inserted his hand, and with it began to scoop up into his fist the rich and luscious food.

"Every sense was most delightfully solaced for the time; and he considered himself, no doubt, the happiest little monkey in the grove. He turned his eye upward to the tree above him—elevating his hands, jabbering in glee, and making, in his evident delight, a thousand grimaces. I now discovered a large monkey in the tree above him, and knew that my time for sport had come.

"I showed myself, and commenced the chase, which completely startled the little creature from its fancied security and pleasure. One hand being completely crippled by the cocoa-nut, which it had not sense enough to let go, and release itself from, its usual speed was greatly impeded. Its anxiety also becoming intense, it muttered trembling notes of fear between its teeth, like an idiot child."

"O, poor thing," said Helen; "where was the old monkey, I wonder?"

"Well, I will tell you," said Mr. Poor, "for I was soon made to feel the protecting presence most sensibly, I assure you. I was on the point of taking the little monkey by its tail, in the excitement of the chase, when around me and above, there seemed to be the concentration of every discordant

and unmeaning sound in nature. For the moment, I was startled and confounded; and passing under a cluster of the trees at the time, received a shower of the hardest nuts upon my shoulders and head."

"O, how *good* that was!" said Helen, laughing heartily at the idea of the ludicrous scene. "Do tell us, how did you escape to tell the tale?"

"O, we both escaped," said the stranger; "the little monkey hopped off, cocoanut and all; and I made good the old adage, that 'discretion is the better part of valour,' getting clear, as soon as I could, of the cocoanut-trees and the monkeys."

"You were well paid for meddling there," said Helen, "and I am very glad indeed that you were defeated."

"Your joy must arise from the fact, that it was in the exercise of pure mischief, I suppose," said the stranger, laughing; "for I did not even have the excuse of wishing to catch the monkey. But a meddling disposition—excuse me—may sometimes be exercised from the noble motive of wishing to do good. I have myself, in a few cases, been rewarded by the gratitude of some, who will never forget Peter Poor."

"Peter Poor! what a name!" said Helen, involuntarily.

"I might have had a better," said Mr. Poor, "if my mother had been a brighter woman, I suppose. It must now remain as it is. Nobody meddled in the matter as they ought, and I am the sufferer of the peculiar sobriquet in familiar phrase of Pete Poor."

"I should think, that in this case, meddling would have been a decided benefit to you," said Helen, highly amused and thoroughly interested in the singular man.

"I am sorry to differ from you in that single exception," said the stranger. "I think the name has been a decided advantage to me. From being unpretending, and thus expressive of my character and fortunes, I have been able to

indulge my passion for meddling in other people's business, without exciting either suspicion or jealousy."

"You seem to lay particular stress on the pleasure of meddling," said Helen; "but, judging from the monkey story, I suspect you sometimes fare the worse for it."

"O, yes, sometimes," he said; "that is, when I meddle with beasts, that place no value on ingenuity, and see no virtue in taking to one's self a little innocent recreation at times."

"Innocent recreation, indeed!" said Helen; "laying hands on a poor, little baby monkey—perhaps the pet of the family."

"Would it not have been much worse," said the stranger, earnestly, "if I had run off with the blue-eyed, flaxen-haired pet of a fond mother, leaving her to linger on through life in hopeless anguish?"

"O, decidedly worse," said Helen; "but we scarcely ever hear of such instances excepting in romance."

"Indeed, you are mistaken," said the stranger; "I know a touching instance of that kind, that happened near the monkey scene."

Just then, there was a quick tread in the entry, and a tall black man presented himself at the door. He held his hat in his hand, and looked respectfully at his master, whose reception of him we must leave to another division of this narrative.

CHAPTER XXIII.

MR. ROSE, on whom all eyes turned, had lost all his former animation. His face looked pale and livid, and his coal-black eye had a fixed expression, as he gazed at the negro. His internal and external nature seemed to have lost their consciousness of the present, either in some all-absorbing scene in the past, or some anticipated event in the future. Mrs. Rose,

with the quick eye of affection, perceived that one of his strange moods was upon him, and going quickly towards him, said—

“My dear, Jack seems to have come in on urgent business; you had better speak with him.”

Aroused to consciousness, he struck his forehead with his open palm, rose up sullenly, and said—

“I will speak with him in the piazza.” Helen, who had noticed his abstraction with concern, rose and held his hand with the affection of a child. As he passed through the room, she walked by his side, pressing it tenderly between both of her soft white palms; and as he reached the door, she raised it to her lips. He impatiently shook her off, as if in a hurry, saying, in a low hurried tone—

“There, there, child.” She turned, and a tear glistened in her soft eyes.

Mrs. Rose entered the room almost immediately, saying, that Mr. Rose had gone in a hurry to the plantation.

“What is the matter, dear mother?” said Helen, “are any of the negroes very sick?”

“No,” said Mrs. Rose, “the woods are on fire, and Jack is particularly anxious about some very valuable timber, that is all hewed out, and piled in the midst of the forest. This, he tells his master, is so well dried, by the past summer’s drought, that it will burn quite as readily as the dry leaves.”

“He must be very considerate of his master’s interest,” said the stranger.

“Not much more so than you would often find men of the same class. When well selected, and properly controlled, they are really entitled to respect, on account of the attachment they feel for their master’s interest; even his personal standing is with him a matter of pride.”

“Such servants are, I suppose, always selected from what are called family servants, are they not, madam?”

“Not invariably,” said Mrs. Rose; “I have known drivers

selected from newly-purchased negroes, act remarkably well in that capacity. They feel all the importance of station among themselves; and they strive to retain the distinction, by attention and obedience. This man, however, that you have seen, is a servant that has always been with Mr. Rose, even before I knew him.

"The first time that I ever saw him, I was struck with his tall commanding figure, his intelligent countenance, and his kind and tender care of Helen. He tended her altogether in her early childhood, and her radiant complexion and light flaxen hair, I always thought looked more radiantly beautiful when contrasted with his very black skin; and when, in the helplessness of sleep, she reclined her head on his shoulder, he protected her with such an earnest devotion, and sheltered her so carefully with his large white umbrella, I often thought it a picture, worthy the pencil of an artist."

"You must feel very much attached to him, miss?" said Mr. Poor, turning to Helen.

"O very much! I do love him dearly! He mingles with my mother and father, in my earliest memories. Indeed, he is not like a common negro; he advises me with a dignity and confidence which shows both judgment and experience, and he always sympathizes in all my little troubles, with the tenderness of a warm heart."

"I see you have a heart too, my dear miss. It is a good sign, when we see one who has experienced kindness from others, forget them not. If you had seen as many hollow hearts as I have, you would know how much pleasure I feel in witnessing the impulsive outpourings of a grateful heart."

"And is it true that there are any hollow hearts in this world?"

"O yes; so hollow, so empty, that the wind might blow through them. True hearts receive their impulses from the mind; and the manifestation is sincerity and feeling. Hollow hearts receive their impressions through the eyes and the ears,

which only manufacture from them a superficial crust of outward seeming !

“True hearts are uniform and steady, as the soul is undying! Hollow hearts are as changing as the varying expression of a man’s countenance.”

“Well,” said Helen, who was deeply interested in the stranger’s vigorous and truthful manner of expressing himself, “I have heard before of wind blowing through hollow heads, but never through hollow hearts.

“I heard once of a young and beautiful lady, who was sought in marriage by a gentleman of wealth, but one very deficient in intellect. She despised him, but as he was favoured by her mother, who was poor and ambitious, she was determined to insult him, so that he might himself leave, without giving her the odium with her mother of refusing so tempting an offer. He was a most ardent lover, and sought her company often in the evening, when they were left alone. He once remarked to her that ‘the wind was blowing very hard.’ ‘O no, sir,’ she said, ‘you are mistaken, it is only whistling through the vacuum in your head.’

“I should think that woman had a very hollow heart,” said the stranger, “and was utterly incapable of true love. Her feelings and motives were all deceptive, harsh, and impure.”

“Experience certainly proved her feelings to be deceptive,” said Helen, “for she married him after all.”

“No doubt,” said the stranger, “the temptation of wealth was too strong for such a nature to withstand. A woman who exercises wit at the expense of benevolence, one who would so wound the feelings of a lover, only to triumph in his disappointment, must lack all those refined emotions of the mind, which impart to feeling the purest enjoyment of life. Woman must be entirely ignorant of her high destiny, when she gives her heart up to the guidance of such low faculties of the mind, as a desire of triumph, a desire of gain, and the base desire of wishing to appear to her mother what she was

not. Believe me, Miss Rose, her heart was too hollow for true love ever to find a resting-place there."

After retiring to rest, Helen remembered the promised account of the stolen child, and regretted, that from the interruption, it had been forgotten. She was conscious of having been much interested in the singular stranger; and dreamed of Cuba, with its bright fields of green, its brilliant birds, its cocoanuts and monkeys. With these visions was also mingled the sad face of her mother, when she said good-night; the repulsive countenance of her father, when he threw off her hand from his; and then the dark shades of oblivion rested on her slumbers, till the morning sun came peeping in through the white dimity curtains of her room.

The stranger entered in his journal before retiring to rest—

"My meddling propensity is now perfectly satisfied that there is some mystery here. The present object of my life shall be to develop it: but in order to do this, I must be wise, wary, and willing; that is, cunning, prudent, and faithful. I see that I have awakened suspicion, which proves to me, that so far, I am on the right track. Time alone can prove the result."

CHAPTER XXIV.

NIGHT with his leaden wings, moonless and starless, rests upon the scene; wrapping the village, the water, the marshes, and the islands, in a mantle of darkness.

Silence reigns around—all nature's hushed,
And one unbroken spell pervades the earth!
Beasts and men have sunk into forgetfulness;
But as there is no rule without exception,
So, the watch-dog claims to be excluded

From among the list of slumberers.
His solitary howl is heard afar ! and now
It meets the ear with deep and fearful sound,
Telling of some dark-hearted, base intruder !

Across the water from the village, and beyond the "table of pines," is a solitary spot. O how solitary ! There are ruins, desolation, desertion ! The mouldering mementos of self-love and self-gratification, left to the owls, the bats, and the evil ones of earth ! There they find a fit hiding-place from man !

Before it is an extent of marsh and water ; and behind it is a long reach of barren land. The spirit alone may penetrate the present gloom. The distant howl of the watch-dog falls with a lengthened cadence on the ear. The trickling of the water through the marsh-grass, as it seeks its level again in the great deep, is heard with a steady rippling sound, stealing into the awakened sense from the dark impervious gloom of the outer world !

But list ! to the muttered sound of human voices, as they approach the landing-place of this retired spot ! A canoe glides from its station, and splashes with a dull sound, in the now shallow waters of the creek. Two men step in, and the paddle in the water gives a dull, uncertain sound, as if it were muffled : and so it is ! They leave Fancy Hall in its desertion behind them, while before them is a winding creek, half spent. They look like dark spirits of the scene, as they pass slowly and cautiously along, between the soft muddy borders of the now tiny current. Now, the canoe scrapes on the dark blue mud ; and now, where the water has left the mud entirely bare, they get out and drag it through the yielding moss.

The silence was interrupted by a suppressed voice—"Ah, ah, country bawn, you hab nuff trouble fo' go yonder to-night," said the paddler and owner of the boat.

"Don't you want to go too, boy ?"

"Fo' true," responded the paddler, and then there was a

silence for a few minutes, and a steady energy in accomplishing their design of getting through the creek.

"Are you sure all the freight is on board, and that they will sail to-night?" said the passenger.

"Yes, I see de last boat-load go, fore I left Cedar Island; an' dey will tack tru de sound on the last ob de ebb." Then, after a short pause he added, "Rise up, Peter, and look ober dis marsh grass, dat rise up bery saucy when i' massa gone to sea; you see da little star da shine yonder? mine dey don't see you pass, boy!"

"They mustn't do that, Cuff."

"Look ya, man, don't talk my name too loud in dese parts."

They moved on now more silently and carefully than ever. Directly, the one named Peter, after standing up and looking intently towards the place from which "da little star" was shining, leaned over and said in a whisper—

"The vessel is at the mouth of this creek; so paddle right down to the big river."

A few moments of suspense, silence, and exertion, brings them to the mouth of the small creek. They enter the river with caution. There lies, not twenty yards from the shore, a sloop, anchored for the night. Like a bird at rest, with its wings folded, and its head concealed, she lies upon the quiet, dark waters, with no sign of life or motion. Her sails are all corded to the mast, and the captain and sailors are all profoundly resting for the coming day of labour and toil. The night-lamp shines from the cabin window, and the long, faint line of light, gleams across the dark waters, far athwart the canoe.

"Softly, for the cabin window," whispers Peter. A few moments of suspense and dread, and the canoe glides noiselessly under the cabin window; and Peter's eager countenance is thrust within the full reflection of the flickering lamp. His black visage, white eyeballs, red lips and woolly hair, afford a

strange contrast to the angel face that meets his view ! Within three feet of him, lay the head of a sleeping girl—glorious in innocent beauty, and glowing with the warm animation of human life.

Her drooping lids are closed heavily, as if exhausted nature had sought necessary relief in sleep ; and her long dark lashes, suffused with recent tear-drops, rest fringe-like on her fair and lovely cheek.

The spirit of this lovely being, either awes or interests this man of darkness ! He gives one scrutinizing glance around the cabin, and then extending his black hand but for a moment to the folds of the dress which covers her innocent heart, he steps noiselessly back into the canoe. The paddle sinks again, with its dull uncertain sound, into the water. The sound seems to mingle in with the continual ripple of the ebbing tide ; and the light canoe scuds along in the direction of the village.

They soon, however, change their course, and strike boldly across the stream. Then may be heard their voices again in conversation. Night still hangs heavily over the scene. Murky clouds veil the heavens from the eye of man ; and nought is seen starry, but the sparkling of the briny wave, as it is thrown from the paddle by the hand of Cuff.

Fit emblem of the human mind, when lost to the light of reason, the light of conscience, and the light of that pure spirit, which speaks from God to man ! The clouds of error obscure the pure region of these lights—the only beacons to lead it to the upper world ! These may be felt by the human mass, a glare, or a glow, a semblance only of that starry world : but they fade away, like the dull, destructible light of the glow-worm, or they flare up, like the evanescent light of a fire, which perishes and disappears with the decaying embers.

Ah, Cuff ! would that you *could* reason : would that you could penetrate into the dark obscure, towards which you are rushing with a madman's fate !

"Now, Cuff," said Peter, "you must be sure to do the rest of my business to-night."

"Yes," said Cuff, rather sullenly, "but I hope you will 'member, dat you aint pay me anyting yet."

"Hold your hand, Cuff," said Peter, reaching over towards him, "here is your pay for this part of your work, and more when you bring that man to my camp."

"Hard matter, dat, but try my bess," said Cuff, now whistling a tune low and cheerily, as if calling up the winds from the sleeping waves.

They proceeded across the dark waters, and the tide now turning, they hear a rumbling sound borne on the freshening breeze, like the uncording of ropes, accompanied by the sailor's song, as he raises the anchor from its bed in the river. Involuntarily, Peter rises from his seat, and turning towards the sea, gazes anxiously in the direction of the significant sounds. The dark outline of his form, with his arms actually extended from him, as if with the most intense interest, produces a quizzical effect on Cuff, who makes a low, chuckling sound, and at last gives way to a hearty laugh, saying—

"Wy, wot is de matter wid dis nigger?"

But whatever it might have been which prompted the feeling and the action in Peter, it prompted him also, to keep it within his own heart. He only answered—

"Paddle on Cuff; time is going, and my work is not done yet."

The boat now entered a creek much larger than the one they had come down on the other side of the river, and up this they went very swiftly, as the tide had now fully set in. The clouds, which all the night had shadowed the earth like a funeral pall, bore now every appearance of clearing away; for here and there might be seen stars, peeping through the parting veil, like good spirits of earth, who, though shining with only the reflected light of Heaven, seek to impart to others

the gentle influence of those beams, though struggling with the adversities and difficulties of a human existence.

But night still hovers over the scene, and the little canoe glides along quietly through the windings of the creek, till it approaches the dark outline of the shore. Then the paddle is heard at longer intervals, and its splash in the water has that same uncertain sound, till the tiny boat touches the darkly shadowed shore, and is drawn up among the gnarled roots of an overhanging cedar.



CHAPTER XXV.

THE overhanging cedar, which throws its dense shadow over the little canoe, is one of many which grow around "Cedar Point;" a place lying in the outline of the shore, and jutting out towards the island, from which it is divided by a marsh, intersected by small creeks. Not more than a mile from this place is a cluster of small hammocks, uncultivated except by the hand of nature, which overflows them in every gale, washing up the sand and the mud around the roots of the cedar, the oak, and the sea-willow, which cover these scraps of isolated ground. They are situated on a hard marsh, wild and bleak, the terminus of the eastern part of the island. From this, on both sides, extend wild fields of marsh, untenable except by water-fowl. On the west, running up into the country, following the course of the Newport river, which washes the opposite side of the island; on the east, extending as far as the eye can see, first between the island and the main, then to the interminable ocean beyond.

These hammocks, although unfit for the use of man, afford refuge and shelter for beasts and birds. A causeway passes from the main to the island, which here approach within a few hundred yards of each other, "Cedar Point" being on the main.

Standing on this causeway, near sunset, we may see a beautiful and romantic view, peculiarly characteristic of sea-board scenery, possessing the calmness of repose in clear weather, the wildness of sublimity in stormy weather.

To the right, the hammocks cluster around the point of the island, as if to shield it from the inroads of the boisterous wave, while they nestle on the green, waving grass, as if at rest in their native element. They are reflected against the glowing western sky. From the centre of one of them, towers a majestic oak, lifting its brawny arms in seeming defiance of the tempests that have scattered its leafy honours on the wild north-eastern blast. The long gray moss waves from these branches on the evening breeze, displaying the lord of the islet in a livery of beauty, or a livery of death, according to the fancy of the beholder. It is indeed a livery of death, for, like the mistletoe, it lives upon the vitality of the tree, till, slowly, but surely, it saps the fountain of its own support, then dies. Around the oak is a cluster of dark green cedars, on which are alighting myriads of white cranes. Flocks of these birds are flying from various quarters, and the trees are already bending beneath their weight. They look like white flowers in the distance, but discordant notes reach our ears, that indicate strife and contention. They fly up and alight again, as if contending for an old and favourite location.

But look along the marsh that surrounds these hammocks! Here you may see the lordly bull, with his head and horns erect, proudly taking his accustomed path to these spots of refuge. There a cow, walking more leisurely, lowing with maternal interest to the calf running by her side.

The sun sheds a golden light on this scene, and far away, over these fields of green marsh, are seen the luxuriant woods of M'Intosh county.

On the left we see signs of habitation; a short causeway, striking this one at right angles, runs up to a shady avenue of the island, where the native oaks of the forest have been

left, with their branches interlocked above head ; near by, we see a settlement, and hear the evidences of animated life. Farther on, we see a dwelling towering up in country-like refinement, combining an air of comfort with some degree of style. The shores of the island, as they meet the eye, are bordered with the same dark green cedars, which look like dark shadings of a beautiful picture. On the main, just at hand, we see "Cedar Point," with its margin of dark green cedars, and its small settlement on an elevation in the centre, commanding the view of the causeway and island. Far down the opening vista beyond, we see again the long waving lines of white cranes, flying to a larger hammock, situated on the field of marsh, and there too the green cedars are dressed, and there the strife and contention is going on, till at last the shades of evening close around us all.

Near the cluster of hammocks, and joining the hard marsh, which connects them to the eastern point of the island, is a bluff, called "Half Moon," from its crescent form. Like a single idea well expressed, the situation looks well within itself. The regularly curving bluff is washed by the Newport river, and rises eight or ten feet above an ordinary tide. To the left, in front, is "Woodville," a country seat, where domestic comfort, and youthful mirth and joy, impart a continual charm to the home circle. All around, on the right, and back, is a wide-extended prospect of distant woods, and marsh, and hammock.

Here is an old house, small and unimportant ; but where the records of the past ? This seems like a whisper from by-gone times, telling of habitation and life, of throbbing hearts, and warm, gushing, animated nature. But the winds have rushed by, and the encroaching waves have obliterated all traces of the past, except the uncertain murmur that is ever heard, sighing through the crevices of the small old house !

What does the human heart say ? Is there not one left to tell the tale of its bright and happy days ? Yes, look at that

calm old face, surrounded by its neatly plaited border of white lace, and seated down in comfort and repose not far away. Ask her what *desertion* means, and she will tell you that she has learned the bitter lesson by *heart*: but that she has found kind, kindred hearts to lean upon, on earth, and God to look up to, above.

Desertion, too, rests upon this scene, like a shadow from this desolate heart. The heart may react—that heart has reacted—reposing its higher aspirations upon God, its lower on the widow and orphan, opening its warm affections, and unlocking its fountain of abundance, in sweet sympathy with humanity. But time alone, with its slowly acting results, may renew again upon this bluff the vigour of its prime, decking it once more in those green sumptuous vestments of the past.



CHAPTER XXVI.

THE darkness and loneliness of midnight envelops the scene. The peaceful hearts at "Woodville" are quietly throbbing under their coverlets, freed from waking thoughts and emotions, only enjoying with repose of body, the pleasing innocent exercise of the imagination, that bright link between the active and passive faculties of the mind, as it is between the waking, acting agent, and the inert, passionless sleeper. But a sound meets the ear from that direction! At regular intervals the fisherman's net, with its border of bullets, falls heavily upon the waters; and the shrimp, the prawn, and the mullet seeker is satisfied that both his owners and himself, will be abundantly supplied from the prolific waters of Newport river.

In the direction of Cedar Point, all is oblivious, excepting in one spot. There is a fire light shining among the trees,

and two grinders are at the mill. The covering of the mill is a small square shed, supported on four corner posts. The mill consists of two large stones, placed horizontally in a frame; a pole rests upon the edge of the top stone, and passes through a hole above.

These men stand on opposite sides, and holding the pole with their right hands, feed the mill with their left, pouring handful after handful of corn into the hole which is in the centre of the top stone. Their bodies sway backwards and forwards, and they sing in the monotonous and laboured strains that negroes love. Yet, for all that, it sounds well, accompanied as it is, by the continual hum of the grinding stone. The stone turns so swiftly, that it appears stationary; and the white flour passes from a little hole at the side of the frame, into a basket. The midnight hour is nought to the grinders, and the flour not much more, excepting as an excuse to lengthen their employment to the short hours of night. It was natural for them to grind at any hour between sunrise and sunset, and this was all they cared should be known.

Negroes are not regular beings. They are creatures of volition, the machinery and the will being synonymous. Their hearts lead them in an erratic course, from birth, through life, till death. And they are pleased with variety, because variety gives change of emotion. Being the grand organ of physical action, the mind acts upon it, as the hand of a performer does upon the strings of a harp. The vibration is heard immediately, and the sound lingers on the ear, losing itself at last in distant, dying sweetness. But the heart, the heart of man, with its thousand strings of powerful and modified emotions! From the first dawning of life's faint ray, it looks up to mind as to a God! Mind touches with its emphatic finger, whether moral or animal, whether intellectual or insane, the many-stringed harp that lies beneath it, and the vibrations charm and delight the physical being! Thus it is, as the "sparks fly upward," so it is the heart is prone to do the will of man.

The public road passes near the mill, but a tall figure goes around in the shadow of the dark cedar grove, and approaching the end of the house at Cedar Point, taps gently at the window ; he taps again, and then again, and then, a clear, low voice whispers—

“ Mass Thomas, Mass Thomas ! ”

“ Annie, there is Jack’s signal ; something is going wrong now, I know ! ” and Mass Thomas rises and goes to the window.

“ Well Jack, what’s the news ? ”

“ The conjuror is come down from Northampton to Oak Hammock to-night. He is there now, and has a stranger with him. I got a message to go there to-night, through your two boys at the mill. The mill is their signal of safety from this side, so you must pass by the margin to the causeway. I will go back, and pass again by the mill, so they will not suspect anything. You will find us in the old house at ‘ Half Moon,’ an hour from this.”

“ Very well, Jack, I will go to ‘ Social Bluff ’ and Woodville for aid, and in one hour we will surround you.”



CHAPTER XXVII.

A WEEK after the above events, a party of merry gossipers of the lower class are travelling towards the village. It is court-week, and they have been up to the county-town, with their marketable articles, and now are returning, happy in the acquisition of finery from the new Yankee store. This is the place where everything is bought, from the moss which hangs waving from every old oak, to the supple twigs of the tender sapling ; every old piece of iron, picked up in the street ; and no objections either to a stray goose or duck occasionally—namely,

as often as they may be offered—irrelative to the form of possession, whether they are raised from the egg, or taken up from the green meadow.

Miss Gracey rejoices in a new dress and a bunch of false curls. These are attached to horn combs, and she sticks them in above her own, which hang below them, streaming on her bosom in long, straggling locks—every one standing alone, and curving so much *up*, instead of around, that they might be taken for the ghosts of departed duck tails, that had travelled the same road. They are, also, so peculiarly black, that she might readily be taken for a lone remnant of some Indian tribe, if she did not, on every occasion, exhibit so great a hankering after the civilized and fashionable world.

“Aunty,” she said, addressing an old lady, who is riding a hard-trotting sorrel, behind; “whip up Rosinante; I want to ask you somethin’.”

“What is it, gal?” said the old lady; and striking up a trot, she presented a most ludicrous appearance, with her wide cap-frills flying; her old mashed black bonnet stuck above them; and her red bottle-nose standing out in bold relief from the centre of the halo—“What—do—you—want—gal?” gasped the old woman, grunting, as she arrived at the side of the cart.

“Don’t you think Mrs. Rose would lend me one of Miss Helen’s dresses, to make mine by?”

“Lord, gal! what are you in sich a *hurry* about? But I might ’a knowed it—you must always put everything you git right on your back.”

“I am right, this time, Aunty,” said Gracey; “for I want to go back to town next week.”

“What! to see them outlawed niggers hanged?”

“Everybody is going to be there,” said Gracey; “and Jordan says, if you will lend me Rosinante, he will carry me on to the settlement where his people stay.”

"Your head will look worser an it does now, before you git to the eend of that journey," said Cousin Teddy, who sat in the fore part of the cart.

Cousin Teddy was a widow, and planted by sufferance a small patch or field of public land. She had engaged a boy-man to plough it for her, and had found him so useful, that she had determined to bestow herself, children, and possessions upon him, for all time to come. Thus it became her to laugh down all of Cousin Gracey's attractions, and to fix herself always at his side, on the front seat of the cart. At this time she was in a particularly good humour, for she thought Rowlan was very nearly caught.

"You and Jordan will take the town, next Friday, Gracey," she continued; "ef you will only fix your head like it is now, and ride Rosinante; I'll bet nobody will see any hangin', but that hangin' hair o' yourn on each side o' your yellow face."

"Shame, Teddy," said old Aunty, who was now walking her horse along through the heavy sand. "Rowlan sees your face is whiter 'an Gracey's; but you know the poor gal never was white, after she had them fits. Peor, fitified thing she used to be—a long time ago."

"Yes; *a long time ago*," responded Teddy, with a knowing wink at Rowlan, and a laugh in which he joined. "Now, honey," she continued, with a loving glance on Rowlan, "keep *your* horse off them *pomater* roots;" and she laid her hand on his, and gave it a gentle squeeze. Now this was an exquisite touch, for, above *all* things, Rowlan wanted to own a horse.

"Now, Cousin Teddy," said Gracey, "you don't think I mind you and Rowlan, do you? But Jordan wants me to wear my new frock, and I mean to ask Mrs. Rose to lend me one of Miss Helen's, to look at; because I know she aint carried all away with her."

"Why, Gracey, didn't Jordan tell you how much trouble Mrs. Rose was in now—how that one o' them conjurors was a white man in disguise like; and how he said he *must* see Mr.

Rose; an' when Mr. Rose went bold-like into the jail, he comed out like a crazy man; an' that night took a apoplexy fit?"

"Why, no; Jordan never told me a word of it," said Gracey.

"Jordan was too busy lookin' at your hair!" said Teddy, as she turned round, and caught sight once more of the old subject, dangling down longer on the susceptible breast of the "would-be" fashionable.

"I reckon none of you knows as much as I does," said Rowlan. "That white nigger conjuror laid a trap for Mr. Rose's driver, Jack."

"What kind of a trap, Rowlan?" said the old woman. "Was it anything like what old 'Crow-claws' lays for his runaways?"

"What kind is that, Aunty?"

"Why, they say it's for all the world like a wild-turkey trap, only it's baited with a piece of fat *bacon*, and when they git in and eat it up, they git too lazy to come out again;" and the woods rang with laughter at this new perpetration against their rich neighbour. At last Rowlan said—

"They has a fine scent for meat, *when they go abroad*; there's no doubt o' that."

"But what kind of a trap was that the conjuror laid for Jack?" said the old woman to Rowlan.

"Well, this white nigger got in with Cuff, the outlaw, who has done all sorts o' badness about these parts, and tells him he is an old conjuror from the West Indys. He makes him take him down to the sloop, anchored at 'White-shells,' to put a spell on it, he said, so that when it came back with all sorts o' Yankee notions, they could go and git what they wanted, and never be seen."

"Why, what a nat'ral fool," said the old woman; "and did Cuff believe him?"

"Well, he paid Cuff so well, he was 'bleeged' to b'lieve him

He said, when they went to the vessel, everything was still as the dead; and then he knew he must be a great conjuror, and had made them all sleep sound on purpose. They went from there to Cedar Point, and sent one of his spies for Jack, and then they went and hid on Oak Hammock all next day. The next night they caught them in the old house at 'Half-Moon.' "

"So the trap didn't do any good, after all," said the old woman.

"The trap was too big," said Rowlan, laughing, "for it caught two, instead of one. Jack informed against them, they say, and put Mr. Duncan right upon the track."

"But what's all this I hear 'bout Mr. Rose?"

"This West-Indy conjuror said he must see Mr. Rose; so they sent Mr. Rose into the room to see him. When he come out, the old man looked blacker than he ever did before; but he told them all the man was honest; and they let him go on his word."

"There must be somethin' wrong," said Teddy, "or Mr. Rose never would a' been so keen to git him off."

"I've telled you all afore this," said the old woman; "all wasn't right in that house. He looks too dark and Spanish-like to be the head of such a family as that."

"Well, but he is though, ma," said Teddy; "and wot 'll you say now?"

"Hain't I been there often, Teddy?" said the old woman, indignantly; "and hain't I been the first to hold every child born to him here? and I know none of 'em ever looked like Miss Helen."

"Well, he is always mighty kind to them all, though he is so distant like," said Gracey, who had sat quietly in the back part of the cart listening, since the serious attack on her curls and complexion. "That time Mrs. Rose hired me to stay with them, I never seed a kinder man than he was to Miss Helen

an' all; and now Miss Helen is gone away, you see how half-crazy he is all the time."

"Well," said the old woman, "time will prove the truth of his beseechin's. But, gals, don't you see it's time to be gettin' on home to the children? Make Rowlan whip up that nag o' your'n, Teddy."

"You mean *his'n*, ma," said Teddy, with a reproachful look.

But "ma" was too fully under the influence of the upward pressure of Rosinante's back, to hear anything but the flap, flap, flap, of the saddle-skirts against the horse's side; and the flip, flip, flip, of her own person, as it came down upon the saddle.

Here they go down the road! The gray nag and the sorrel mare! The gray nag, the bond of union between two *ardent* lovers; and the sorrel mare, crying *disunion* at every step; but the old lady holds on, and they finally disappear beyond a turn in the "big road."

CHAPTER XXVIII.

BEFORE we proceed, we wish to return to the county jail, in order to make our narrative clear. The aspect of this place was not more pleasant than the ideas connected with it. It was situated in a small town, which consisted of a few houses scattered along on the stage road, somewhere between Savannah and Darien.

They looked sombre and miserable, with a dingy colouring of yellow or white, showing here and there, through the smoky miasma of swamps and dram shops.

On the outskirts of the town, there were one or two neat-looking houses, that seemed as if comfort might be obtained there in frosty weather, when the fumes and the miasma to-

gether might either be congealed or dissipated. This is no slander, for to say the least of it, the morality of county towns is a very questionable thing.

Witness that counter, devoted to slops, and the tell-tale gill measure. Witness the dark-looking figures that move about from dusky eve till midnight; and if suspicion would fain rise up, and stalking out from the dark corner of one's mind, seek the daylight to sun and bask itself in, some form would surely meet the eye, that would again reinstate it in its dark resting-place. Alas for humanity!"

Between this line of houses and the border of woodland on the left, was a bare open space, in which was a court-house and a county jail. The latter was a small wooden house, distinguished only by bars across the windows. Forlorn and desolate it looked, and forlorn and desolate seemed those within it.

Mr. Rose approached the village in his buggy, crossed the small arched bridge which spans the head of navigation on the Newport river, and passing into the town, turned up the only side street on the left, and stopping, entered the jail.

"Who is it that wishes to speak with me here?" said Mr. Rose.

"I am the man, sir," said the only person visible in the room, now turning from the window, through which he had been looking upon a wide waste of poverty-stricken fields.

"I am the man, sir," he repeated in an independent tone. "We have met before."

"Well, sir, and what do you wish with me?"

"To impart some information which may be valuable to you in future."

"Who are you? and why do you think that you could be useful to me?"

"*Only, sir,*" and he looked at Mr. Rose with a peculiar expression, "*only,* that from my meddling disposition, I have become interested in your affairs."

Mr. Rose turned pale, and said in a tone of suppressed rage—

“You had better let my affairs alone.”

But the man answered him in a careless tone, as if conscious of some unseen power—

“I wish to narrate to you an incident of my travels you have never heard; and you must listen to it.”

“*Must!* what mean you, sir?”

“I mean that your reputation is at stake.”

“You certainly risk a great deal for my sake,” he answered, trembling with rage and irony.

“Not for you, but for those you *deserted*.”

“Deserted! I do not understand you.”

“Hear my narrative, and it may clear away the mists of your understanding. After enjoying a day’s ramble through the woods of Cuba, I approached in the evening the coast, near which was anchored the ship I sailed in. The mountain sloped down towards the sea, bearing on different terraces, trees and fruits that interested my mind and gratified my taste.”

“I care not (whoever you are) anything about your taste or your mind; if this matter concerns *me*, *proceed*.”

The stranger continued in an even and unagitated tone,

“I wish you to remark, that I noticed *well*, the place that I approached. The mountain, as I said was in terraces, bearing trees, with fruits of every description, from the towering cocoa to the delicate guava.

“Then as I descended, there were smaller plants, and rows of bearing pines, scenting the air with odorous perfume.”

Mr. Rose turned from him with an impatient gesture, but the stranger touched his arm, and pointing to a black man lying in the corner, under his blanket, said,

“Wake him not from his stupid slumber, or he may hear what you would not like.”

"Well sir, *go on*. It seems that you are determined to edify me."

"Each terrace had its particular attraction, fruits, spices, vegetables, and flowers."

"And," said Mr. Rose, with a sneer, "you had better add, *monkeys*."

"You are right, sir," said the man bowing; "but I had passed those, and was now come to a more elevated class; those that have consciousness, mental feeling, and acute sensibility of nerve.

"Embowered in a cluster of bamboo bushes, I saw a hut, thatched with dried bamboo, and close by its side ran a limpid brook. This attracted me by its gentle rippling sound, giving promise of a cool and refreshing draught. As I drew near, I heard the voices of two females, one gentle and soft, the other harsh and guttural; and as I reached the front of the cabin, I saw two figures strangely contrasted. One was an old mulatto woman, tall and erect, though seemingly very aged. Her hair was as white as snow, and stood out in a mass of wiry threads around her head. Her eyes had a most singular appearance, scintillating like an intermittent light, and glowing with a pinkish hue. While glaring upon you, they yet seemed to be looking far away at something else.

"As the sound of my steps was heard she ceased speaking. She was standing up, with one hand resting on a stick, and the other holding by a spray of bamboo, that threw its feathery leaves around her.

"The other figure was a remarkably beautiful Spanish girl, as beautiful as Irving's fancy could have painted her. Her name was Isabella Rosco. Perhaps you may have seen her?"

"Proceed."

"The spirit of prophecy, or of expectation, seemed to possess the sibyl-looking woman, for as I approached, she scanned me as if to read my inmost soul. Then, meeting me with two or three rapid strides, she laid her hand rudely on my shoul-

der, and brought me face to face with the beautiful girl, saying,

“‘This is the man; tell him our tale of sorrow, and he will sift it to the bottom. I tell you again, that Grenville Rosco never did it.’”

“Who did she say?” asked Mr. Rose eagerly; but checking himself suddenly, added, “what has all this to do with *me*, sir?”

“She said,” answered the man, as if he had not heard the last question: ‘The same one that stole the child, destroyed the father.’”

“God forbid! but what did the girl say?”

“The young lady clasped her hands, and said with the deepest feeling, ‘O Aminta, death for my father would be preferable to his dishonour; but why do you think otherwise, when my poor mother believed it?’

“‘Yes,’ said the woman, ‘but the blessed Estella was crazed from that hour, and she never knew what she thought, poor thing! but here is one,’ she said, striking her right hand on her breast, ‘who *saw that man* as he rushed out, and it was no more Grenville Rosco *than I am*.’”

“‘Aminta, you know more of this than you will acknowledge,’ said the young lady vehemently; ‘tell me *who* it was.’”

“‘I will tell you *one* thing,’ said the woman, in a commanding tone, ‘that you were too *young* to remember. I minded in these arms your mother’s mother, and came with her to these islands, sometimes living on St. Domingo, sometimes in Cuba, where we are now. She had one daughter, and died a young mother. My eldest children were a pair of twin boys, who were the image of each other. My youngest child, Aminta, is now tending on your mother in Baltimore, as I tended her mother. My twin boys were given to two cousins, one, who was almost always with us, being a Havana creole; and the other, a young Englishman, who had never been here but a few months before he married your blessed mother.

Grenville Rosco, your father, my lady, was as noble a gentleman as ever lived. The night of their wedding, old Aminta stayed in her bamboo cabin, and looked out upon the splendid merry-making of her young mistress's bridal; but all were not happy that night. Two dark figures came down to the bamboo thicket and talked. Aminta's ears were wide awake, and heard 'Revenge,' and Aminta's eyes are better in the night than in the day. The next day my son was gone, and never since have these eyes beheld him.'

"'But you do not say *who* it was, Aminta?'

"'I say again, it was not Grenville Rosco; and time, and this young man, can prove the rest.'

"And then they told me all," continued Peter Poor, for you no doubt have recognised him, "do you wish to hear more?"

"Not now, not now," said Mr. Rose, gasping as if for breath, "some other time."

"Make restitution of all, sir—this is the only rule of right; and be assured that I am not ignorant of your proceedings."

Mr. Rose looked pale and miserable. He walked out mechanically, and with a leaden gaze passed into the open space, that seemed as blank to him, as his hopeless, rayless mind.

He untied his horse, got in his buggy, and was turning towards the river, where the short arched bridge was. There were no clouds passing across the sky, producing lights and shadows. That would have been some relief; but all was shadow, dense, chilling, and cheerless. No sound was heard along the deserted streets, except that which issued from a party of loiterers, lounging in the piazza of a store. Strange to say, Mr. Duncan was among them, and he was with loud and mirthful voice telling of the recent capture. Every word fell with awful distinctness upon Mr. Rose's ear, as his horse, unheeded, passed slowly along the street.

"Well, that is a *capital* fellow, boys; he acted the negro character to *perfection*."

"But how did you find out, Duncan, who he was so soon?"

"Because he whispered a name in my ear that was a passport anywhere: and now, boys, if any of you want a lawyer, he is the man for you. If he can't out-herod Herod, I am a fool."

Mr. Rose passed by, heedless of every other external circumstance. There was only within him an intense consciousness.

His horse and buggy passed over the arched bridge with him in safety, but his road turning suddenly to the right, over a smaller bridge, his horse took fright from the loosened rein, and dashing off, his master fell heavily on the ground. This happened in sight of the loiterers at the store, who, running to his assistance, found him insensible.

CHAPTER XXIX.

"Yo, yo, heave yo!" sounded over the wide waters, and mingled in with the rising wind.

"Yo, yo, heave yo!" sounded again, and again. The anchor of the schooner was raised up through the salt waves, and the cable grated harshly, and with a heavy sound over the side of the vessel. Still the fair girl slept!

The sails were unfurled and caught the freshening breeze, and like a "thing of life," aroused from slumber, she scudded across the sound.

"Tack ho!" was heard in the clear, deep, musical tones of the commander; and directly she leaned over on one side, as if to dip into the liquid wave. Her heavy boom passed across the deck; her sail fluttered listlessly against the mast for one moment, and then refilling, she returned across the sound towards a point of the compass nearer east. "Tack ho!"

is again and again repeated ; but still the sleeping girl hears not.

Her mind and body have been worn out with sorrow ; early sorrow, which weighs upon the spirit like the rude, cold blast upon the tender leaves of spring. Exhausted nature claims repose ; repose for action, or rather, for that reaction which the mind creates within itself.

She lies upon a mattress placed across the stern of the vessel, and on a level with two berths, one on each side of the cabin. A sliding panel divided this from an outer cabin, both small and contracted. Helen Rose has not yet seen them, for she had wept herself to sleep, and is now in the dream land. She holds her pale mother's hand, and glides with her over the wide common. The time was night, and they seemed alone, in the boundless expanse of creation and of thought. The waters looked dark and heavy, and beat upon the shore with a sullen murmuring sound. The winds rushed in a continual blast across the watery waste and over the dreary plain, and moaning and sighing, it died away, to renew itself again, with the same ominous sounds. Where there were houses in life, there were now only ruins, excepting here and there, a decrepid-looking mansion stood out dark and ungainly, amid the gloom of night. Her mother held her hand with a firm and loving grasp, and looked down upon her ever with a sleepless, restless eye. They seemed to move along on the wings of the wind ; her mother ghost-like, and she a spectre child. They paused at Mr. Elliot's. The house was gone, and even the foundation stones were scattered around. They linger among the ruins, and the ghost-mother looks eagerly and earnestly down. She grasps with her left hand (for her right clasps the hand of her spirit-child) scraps of soft paper lying among the ruins. She holds them eagerly to her heart, as she would the life and the love of a dear one, and they rush away again on the wings of the night wind. But now they glide more gently along, and the eyes of the mother look down,

more calm and hopeful, into the eyes of the child at her side. "The minister, he too is gone," she murmured, as they reached the middle of the square, where they could see the village church spire, pointing upward.

"Mother, dearest mother, are we spirits?" breathed the child.

"Yes,—we are spirits, borne upward beyond the present time, to see the end of earthly things, and to feel the undying power of the breath of God."

"But, must this fair place become thus desolate?" sighed the child.

"Can man's work live for ever?" said the mother; "or shall we grieve that it comes to an end, when mind shall live on eternally?"

"Thus dark?"

"Thus dark, and *darker*, if we *love not God*."

"And if we *love God*?"

"Bright, and brighter, till a perfect day shall beam upon our souls."

"Where shall that be?"

"*Where God is*; in the centre of all created intelligences, where no discord, no jarring, no contending forces, disturb the heaven of their repose. Look up, my child, and tell me you will *trust in God*."

The sky brightened up, and it seemed as if the winds passed more gently by them, as the ghost-like mother put the papers into the hand of the spectre-child; and clasping them firmly between her own, impressed a death-cold kiss upon her brow!

Helen started from her slumber, for it had been heavy indeed, with such an incubus resting on her heart and brain. She now became fully conscious of the past, and covering her face with her hands, bent forward, weeping silently. Her ringlets, beautiful even in their disarrangement, fell over, hiding it and her tears; but from no one, for she was solitary and alone. There was but one eye resting upon her there,

and perhaps Helen may have remembered in her soul, that which in her slumber had just been told by a loved voice, "*to trust in God.*"

Reaction always follows promptly in the young and buoyant mind, and after relieving the oppression at her heart by weeping, Helen attended to the duties of a simple toilet. While arranging her dress, to her surprise she found a note that she had not before seen, directed to her. She opened it anxiously, feeling as if, perhaps, some ray of light would be thrown upon the why and wherefore of her present position. It contained these words :

"*Miss Helen* : The star of hope is ever before you, although you may not see it for the clouds that intervene. Believe not for one moment that you are friendless, for even now, when perhaps you imagine yourself most wretched, loving hearts are watching, waiting, hoping for you. To those who think they have a right to love you, you are most precious.

The agent of Hope, P. P."

"Wonderful, wonderful," murmured Helen ; "by what mysteries am I all at once surrounded !"

As she slid the panel aside, the sun streamed down upon the dark, bare boards of the cabin floor, and her heart, young and buoyant, took an intuitive lesson from nature.

Helen was always remarkably fond of the ocean, and the captain of this vessel being one whom she had always known, she ascended the hatchway without fear or restraint. When on the deck, she was struck with the glorious brightness of the day. The flood of joyous light that was thrown over every object, the wide expanse of sky and ocean on the right, with the graceful outline of the shores and the beautiful verdure of the woods of Bryan county on the left. She saw, too, at a glance, that the domestic arrangements of the little vessel were neat and orderly ; the cook was busy in the forward part of the deck preparing the morning meal, and the captain, with

considerate care, was laying a piece of clean sail-cloth on the binnacle, across the stern of the schooner.

This man was an Italian, of a large and coarse exterior; but his nature was kind, and his voice was as soft and melodious as the low cadences of church music. This was the only physical index left of that land of love and romance from which he had come. His Italian characteristics of mind were the idolatry he felt for "little h-Ann," his daughter, his deep respect for his managing wife, and his ambition.

Ludovico was the captain of a small schooner, when he appeared first as a trader in the waters of the coast, and, as if to prove his thorough allegiance to the land of his adoption, the name "America" floated in large letters from the mast head, on every breeze that filled the sails. This vessel he commanded still, and here rested most of his ambition. He could have sooner done without his wife and child than without this water-bound and ever-moving home.

But, to return to Helen and Captain Ludovico. She had always known him, we have said, and this was indeed true, because he had brought them from Bermuda in his vessel fifteen years before, and ever since had been under the patronage of Mr. Rose.

As he finished spreading the sail upon the seat for Helen's comfort, he allowed it also to fall upon the deck, thus serving as a carpet to protect her feet from the dampness of the freshly-washed boards. He addressed her kindly and respectfully as she ascended the quarter-deck and approached him.

"Now, Miss Helen," he said, "you can sit here, without any fear of soiling your dress; and when the breakfast is ready I will be your waiting-man myself, and give it to you here in the bright sunshine. How did you sleep, miss?"

"Profoundly, good Captain Ludovico; and this sunshine and your kind attention is enough to inspire any heart with hope, but one entirely surrendered to despair, as mine was last night—"

"But you must *not* despair, my young lady; did you never hear that the darkest hour is just before day?"

"O yes, captain, I have heard of that, and thank you for the remembrance; but my mother, I am afraid I shall never see her again."

"O yes, do not fear; you must not look on such a gloomy picture as that. Just look at the waves how bright they are, curling over, and glittering in the sun, and see how the fish are jumping up clear out of the water, as if they wanted to see something of the world."

Helen, smiling sadly, replied,

"Well, I have no sympathy now, with anything that wants to see the world. Indeed, how gladly would I be where I was yesterday, and never wish for change again."

"O, but you know you never have seen the city yet; and when you get there you will see something of the world."

This remark closed the conversation for that time, for the cook rang his bell, and the captain went forward to the caboose.

Directly a waiter was brought with a very nice breakfast upon it, consisting of very white hominy, boiled from the flint corn, a fresh broiled mullet, boiled eggs, and sailor biscuits soaked and buttered. Besides these articles, there was a cup of very fine coffee, made by the captain's own hands; and waiting upon her himself, he pressed her so kindly to eat, and entertained her so well all the time, that when she had finished her meal she felt much better than before. Hope beamed upon her from behind the clouds, and cheered her on her solitary way; for, while the captain was taking his breakfast, she read the note over again which she had found in her dress, and came to the conclusion, that although there were mysteries she did not understand, she would still try to "trust in God."

Occasionally through the day the captain came and talked to her about the places in view; and many were the anecdotes he had to tell in fifteen years' experience, connected with Ossa-

baw and Skidaway and Wilmington islands, of boat races and fishing excursions, and gay parties of pleasure. He had taken many out in his vessel in those seasons when produce was "slack," as he termed it; for, although Captain Ludovico had no ambition beyond commanding a schooner, he never could be induced to give up business engagements for pleasure trips, even with the prospect of greater gain.

"O no, no," he would say, shaking his head, "I cannot do it, sir. You pay me more now, but I must not disappoint my employers. They will lose now, and I will lose by and by." And though the captain's tones were always like music in refusal, his appearance, which was exceedingly rough, and his character, which was always firm, without deviation, soon convinced them it was no use to attempt to repeal a decision.

Helen became quite interested in the changing scene. Sometimes they wound through narrow creeks, through which the most careful pilotage was necessary in order to prevent their sticking in the mud, in which they would have had to remain till the flood tide returned. Then they entered into large rivers, which, flowing gracefully through extensive fields of marsh grass, washed the bluff of some plantation or landing, where was deposited for the convenience of transportation, either bales of cotton or tierces of rice. Then again, with every sail well filled, they struck boldly across some sound, into which the waters from the interior emptied, meeting the waters of the ocean, and rushing onward into its wide and limitless bosom. These changes of scene had been a pleasant relief to the anguish of her mind, as long as the day lasted; but, as the evening shadows began to gather, there was a damp and misty haze infused into the atmosphere. Through this the stars looked cold and fixed, and it imparted to Helen a chilled feeling of isolation and despair.

She retired into the cabin, and there with her head bent down once more upon her hands, her luxuriant hair flowing over them again as in the morning, she reflected upon her life.

The confusion of the first recollections of her existence, now impressed themselves with more distinctness upon her mind; and out of this new association of thought there came forth fresh creations, as it were, to haunt her mind. First, to image forth the possible; and then again, to link the possible with the probable; and then again her mind passed on to her mother, falling almost into a dreamy state, so soothing was the thought; when suddenly the harsh, grating sound of the cable passing swiftly over the side of the vessel, startled her from her reclining posture.

Imagine her position! a young and delicate female, reared in the bosom of domestic love, and in the midst of a simple-hearted and generous community, where she had never met anything abroad but smiles, or anything at home but love and tenderness, until a short time since. Distrust had then thrown its dark shadows around her, and terror, and almost loathing, had seemed to force her away from the home circle. This had robbed her mother's gentle face of all its smiles, and clothed her heart in sadness that she could not conceal.

Was it not natural, then, that Helen's most soothing emotions should be linked with one who, though connected with her by no tie of blood, had been to her most truly a mother? From that love now came Helen's only ray of consolation; and that was because it was a ray of true love, pure and unadulterated by worldly policy or worldly expectation. She felt in her heart that her mother's love, pure and tender and undefiled as it was, would have thrown its arms around her under all circumstances; and Helen, feeling this, knew that their union was entire, though separated. Yes, the thought of that tender and gentle mother, with a woman's heart and a woman's love, had soothed her even there in the dark cabin of that little vessel when her heart was oppressed by suffering, when surrounded by the gloom of a dark and cheerless night, and when labouring under the more oppressive night of uncertainty.

Helen was aroused by the grating of the cable against the side of the vessel, and then was sensible of its being warped to land. She heard voices, and much hurrying to and fro over the deck. Directly, Captain Ludovico appeared at the top of the hatchway with a light. This shone down on the cabin floor, where the bright glad rays of the sun had glanced in the morning instilling hope; but now, if there was any hope in that heart, it seemed almost as artificial as that light, and almost as mortal as the captain. How could anything seem heaven-born there, unless it was an indwelling ray, with such a huge manifestation of earthly matter standing up in bold relief, with the full reflection from a well-pierced tin lantern shining full upon him!

"We have arrived at the city, Miss Helen, and now, ma'am"—he was in a hurry you perceive, and this was business, the first to be attended to—"if you will put on your comforts and your bonnet, I will see you up to the house."

Helen wondered in her mind "what house that was, and who her father had consigned her to. She could do nothing, and therefore would ask no questions; at any rate, it would be some relief to get away from the vessel."

Thus she thought, as she tied her bonnet with a trembling hand, and gathered her shawl up around her shoulders. Then robed in the innocence of a dew-drop, pure and unsullied, she stepped upon the deck.

She walked lightly by the side of the captain, and, with a step indicating a vigorous mind and a heart free from reproach, ascended the bluff unaided.

The captain walked beside her still, about five feet five in height, and about two in width. He held the lantern in front as they took step by step through the dry, coarse, deep sand. They kept the winding dray-track up the bluff. On their right were counting-houses and warerooms, dimly seen through the hazy fog that hung densely over the river, while on their left the light reflected on a long shelving bluff of sand, in

which were dug great holes, looking, as one might imagine, like the graves of mummies—of those unhonoured sons of Egypt, who are disinhumed so unceremoniously, picked from the sides of hills by her degenerate children for the sake of the cerements that bind them, or the materials once used in their embalming.

But now they rise above the bluff, and, passing through a double row of trees, cross over the street to a small house which stands on a corner, presenting a front with two small windows and a narrow wooden pavement.

Here the captain knocked, and then turning the lock, walked in without ceremony, saying—

“Walk in, Miss Helen; you are as welcome as my own.”

Poor Helen walked mechanically through the confined passage after the huge manifesto, as if he was her fate.

At last he filled a narrow door-way, passing through into a narrow back parlour; and she followed, mesmerized, or, what is the same thing, passive and subdued.

A decidedly French air pervaded this room; and a French woman, and I may say a little French child, were its occupants. A small room it was, with a small grate, highly burnished with brass and lustre; and coloured paper, cut in fantastic shreds, hung in festoons. Hangings to the windows, with Napoleon on the Alps, and Napoleon crowned emperor, and Napoleon bivouacking, and Napoleon in battle, daubed upon them, in chalk of the most glaring colours. Over these hung leno curtains—a glazed, gossamer gauze—which shielded, without obscuring, their beauties from admiring eyes.

On the walls, wonderful precipices and chasms and snow-clad summits met the view; and long black lines of men, that wound through valleys and through mountain passes, leaving their footprints on the fresh fallen snow. These footprints were large—much larger than necessary—for they were but men, though soldiers of Napoleon.

But nothing must be wondered at. Napoleon was the Alps

of thought—the Alps but Napoleon, in comparative magnitude of perception. The great idea of mankind was actually embodied here, standing with his arms crossed before the stone porch of an Alpine church. The Alps towered far above him, reaching the clouds; and, far above that, reared its crested summit into the blue chaos. Yet, what were the Alps to Napoleon?

He, the *great idea*, stood defined as man, subjected to the properties of nature, having form, and to the properties of mind, possessing divisibility; and in this divisibility consisted his power—his supremacy. He threw his tendrils out subtly, artfully. Unlike the Alps, that towered up boldly into the upper air, he clung like a secret passion to the soul of man; and seizing on the lowest susceptibilities of his nature, he grasped him firmly by the force of will.

Coloured prints adorned the mantelpiece: of flower-girls, with sprays of white and red roses hanging down upon their bare shoulders—of dancing grisettes, and Cleopatra dying on a bed of roses, with the murderous asp wound around her arm.

Thus we have descended from the Alps to the true standard of Ludovico's sitting-room, adding another to the many proofs that, in human experience, there is often but "one step from the sublime to the ridiculous."

"Little h-Ann," the jewel, and Mrs. Ludovico, the incomparable, were formally introduced to Helen; but, although it was done with a great deal of respect on the part of the captain, Mistress Ludovico looked very incomprehensible. She either thought that this respect was so much capital taken from herself, or that Helen Rose was an intruder into her sanctuary, for she tossed her head three times in a minute! The wide lace border standing up from her face, stiffened with wire, and ornamented with bright red ribbons, shook and trembled on its pedestal. The large hoop ear-rings, with a gold heart pendent in the centre of each, scintillated and quivered in the lamplight; and never were there more sym-

thizing hearts in the world, than these two little chained ones, that hung dangling to those thin, crisp-looking ears.

"Little h-Ann" proved to be a jewel of rare value that night. As soon as Ludovico had overwhelmed her in his huge embrace for one moment, he placed her tiny feet on his great broad palm, and plumped her right down into the face of the astonished Helen, who was by this time seated.

A perfect picture the child was. A being with an infantine stature; and yet a figure like a woman, made up of buckram and puffs. With the exception of the lace frills, standing out a quarter of a yard around the face, she was the fac simile of Mistress Ludovico, ear-rings and all.

The complexion was dull, yellowish, and foreign; I mean anything but English. The expression of the child's eyes were elfish, as if she either knew a great deal before she came to this world, or had a far-seeing knowledge of coming events.

This concentrated extract of French and Italian descent held out her mouth to be kissed, dictated by the captain, who considered it the climax of all favours to be allowed to kiss "little h-Ann." She then took Helen's hand, and said, in a clear, lively voice, "Come, and take off your bonnet."

Helen rose up, and the child, taking her by the hand, said again, "Come, you must go into my room; I will show you the way."

They went into a back shed, and up a narrow staircase; and Helen, glad of any excuse to get away to herself, stepped quickly, while the child bounded lightly up the steps by her side.

When they arrived at the top of the stairs, there burned a taper in the entry; and by it, they entered a small room. In this room, and near the door, there was a trundle bed; and the child, drawing her down, said,

"Come, now, pretty lady; sit down, and let me take off your bonnet for you; and then you lie down and rest."

"O, how gladly I will, you thoughtful little creature! But

don't you want to go down and see your father? I wish I could see mine."

"Where is your father?" said the child. But just then they heard sobs from another part of the room; and Helen looked around anxiously, saying,

"What is that?"

Ann, lowering her voice, and holding up her finger, said,

"See, it is only George. She was a bad girl, and mother put her up here to rub the drawers."

"To rub the drawers at night?"

"Yes; to rub the drawers *till she goes to bed*," said Ann. And they both sat looking towards the obscure part of the room, in which they could now see a little dark figure moving to and fro. "And sh-sh," said Ann, holding up that little finger again, "she does not give her a *bit of supper*."

"O, cruel, cruel!" said Helen, quickly.

"Here, she is coming now," said Ann, quickly; "but, *you see*, the captain shall know it *this time*;" and, as the step ascended, like an arrow, she ran up to George, and falling over her, they both tumbled with a loud noise upon the floor.

This was an early introduction into the domestic polity of the captain's household; but it was the very best thing that could have happened for Helen. It interested her mind at once, bringing her faculties and sympathies into active exercise. Her powers of observation were also fully arrested.

The entry lamp was small—merely giving light to guide from one room to another, but not sufficient to enlighten strangers as regards the details. As Ann performed the singular and unexpected feat we have mentioned, and Mistress Ludovico rushed by, Helen threw herself back upon the bed, thinking, very prudently, that she had better keep quiet. By the time she reached the drawers, "little h-Ann," like a fairy elf, was half way down the stairs; and Helen saw the woman take George's arm, and drag her hurriedly out after her, saying.

"What are you doing here, George? Didn't I tell you always to show yourself as de captain come home. I shall tell him you come-up here to pulk, miss. Hush crying dis minute."

For a few moments she stopped in the entry, that the child might compose herself; and Helen, intently attracted, heard her sigh tremblingly, as if to relieve an overcharged heart. Then she heard a gentle voice say,

"I am very glad, ma'am, to hear that the captain has come."

"You are, ah? What for, pray?"

"Because he is *so kind* and *so good* to me, ma'am."

Helen could not resist the temptation to raise her head a very little, just so that she could see a full reflection of their figures against the wall. The woman, enraged at her last remark, clenched her fist, and shaking it in the face of the child, said, in a voice which hissed out between shut teeth,

"He does not know you as well as I do, you little wretch!"

The child raised her head proudly up, and replied,

"He knows the best of *me*, madam; and he knows the best of *you*."

"Very well. I will pay you for that; you *wait*."

They went down stairs; both of them to show the best of their natures to the captain. The youngest, from kindness and gratitude to him; the eldest, from an ever-restless spirit of selfishness and deviltry.

Helen still lay there, indulging her reflections. How singular! She had not been in this house one hour, and she was intently interested already; not only in the actions, but the secret motives of those around her, were forced upon her mind. She was insensibly drawn away from her own troubles, by thinking of this fellow-partaker in early sorrow. She felt a strong desire to behold the little creature that would hold its head up under such tyranny, and say, with an unflinching tone, "He knows the best of *me*, madam; and he knows the best of *you*."

While yet she was thinking of this, little Ann's footsteps were again on the stairs. She tripped lightly into the room, looking actually too little and too knowing to belong to a common existence. She knelt by the low bed, and whispered, softly,

"Wasn't that *good*? and didn't I *fix* Johanna?"

"Who is Johanna?" said Helen, startled by the singular speech and emphasis.

"My mother—Mistress Ludovico. But didn't I *fix* her?"

"How did you *fix* her?"

"When I went down stairs, the captain asked me what noise that was; and I told him that mother made George rub the drawers every night, and that I fell over her."

"But why did you fall over her?"

"Because, if he didn't hear any noise, he wouldn't ask any questions—don't you see?"

"And why couldn't you have told him without?"

"Because, he would have said, Pooh, pooh! nonsense! Johanna always manages well; you attend to your business,—but," continued the child, holding up her little finger again, and shaking her head, "George sees *sights* when the captain goes away."

They were soon after this summoned to supper, and Ann took Helen's hand as they went down; she felt by this time thoroughly interested in this singularly precocious child. The meal passed off better than she expected. The captain was respectful—the mistress had become obsequious.

Helen could not divine the cause at the time, but it was this: "Little h-Ann" had opened a crack for her father to peep through, and Mistress Ludovico, suspecting it from a consciousness of her own nature, was now trying to plaster it up, for she well knew that Ludovico never raised a veil of any kind. Mysteries were mysteries to him, and his unambitious mind had no curiosity beyond the hold of the schooner America.

Helen had still more to learn that night before going to

bed, namely, that Ann was a pupil worthy of her teacher. They occupied the same little room together. While preparing for bed, Mistress Ludovico came in, and, with some vehemence, as if exercising a just indignation, said to Ann,

"Look here, miss, what was that you said to the captain about me, this evening?"

"I told him," said the child quickly, "that I went to lay Miss Helen's bonnet on the drawers, and fell over George, who was rubbing it."

"Well, that was too much—but was that all?"

"Yes, ma'am," unblushingly replied the child. "*I declare*," she repeated, with her little head turned on one side, and her wizard-like, coal-black eyes looking right into her mother's.

"You think you know a great deal, Miss Ann," said the mistress, shaking her head until the ear-rings jingled, "but remember, I know more than you do—will you remember that?"

"Are you my mother, Johanna?" said the little witch, putting on a most comic expression of countenance. This strange familiarity seemed to possess a sudden charm, for the mother's fierce expression relaxed, leaving the cunning which death itself could not have obliterated, and a kind of pleasure that gleamed through serpent eyes, she answered,

"Certainly I am; do you suppose I stole you?"

"Well, that is the reason I am so smart then—kiss me, and good-night."

She jumped from the bed where she had been standing in her little white night robe, and clung like a leech to her mother's neck.

There was a dry report, that sounded something like a kiss; and then as the mother loosened herself, with some rumpling and tearing of laces, she gave another report on the little girl's bare thigh that sounded more substantial, as if there was feeling in it. And so there was, for it was a veritable slap, that

echoed the word "anger" in full sharp notes, while the first in a vain effort to express love failed to express anything.

How sad this is, thought Helen, that one so young should so deliberately lie!—and, busied with her own thoughts, said nothing to Ann, who lay down in her bed with her little black eyes following Helen from side to side, as she prepared for rest. Perhaps, thought Helen, as she reflected on the mother, who seemed so deceptive and unsound, perhaps she knows no better, and I will, if I can, try and teach her how wrong it is. She kneeled by the bedside to pray, and rose again strengthened in her trust and in her kindness of heart.

Helen saw very little more of the captain. He was either engaged or kept intentionally out of the way. Mistress Ludovico kept very busy most of the time fidgeting about, and in the evening she always put on the wide lace frills on her head, while the ear-rings were always dangling and shaking. Poor little hearts, they exemplified as near as possible the principle of perpetual motion.

George went gliding about from one place to another as directed. She was a white, pale child, with a very blue look, as if the circulation was not good. The tips of her fingers were not rosy, but blue; and her lips were pallid.

The captain passed her one evening, when she was sweeping the dust from the narrow wooden pavement in front of the house; and laying his big hand upon her thin silky hair, he turned her face up, saying with a kind look and tone,

"George, why don't you get fat and rosy, like other little girls? Why, my little hearty, you'll never make a sailor's wife."

She smiled and said, "I would rather be a sailor, captain."

"A sailor—why do you want to be a sailor, George?"

"Then I would go in the 'America' with you, sir, as my father did."

"George, where is that pretty new dress," said the captain, "that I gave you when I was here last?"

"O, that is put away, sir."

"Well, you and Ann must get ready—I am going to take you to walk on the common this evening; and as we come back buy some candy and cake, at Aspasia's, for you."

"Please, sir, will you tell her as you go in," said George—and soon the house resounded with the name of "h-Ann, h-Ann, little h-Ann," until the child came tripping down stairs, holding both hands to her ears, as if she was deafened. The captain, delighted with her antics, whenever he had time to notice them, took her up in his arms and gave her a kiss, which did not make a dry report, for it echoed love, love, love.

Helen declined an invitation to join them, thinking very properly, that she would be indeed, like a "fish out of water," in a strange place and in such company.

To her surprise, however, the child went up to her mother, and said with a most exultant tone, and shaking her head in a way that was peculiar to herself,—

"Johanna, we are going to walk—take your keys and open that drawer, and open that box in the bottom of that press."

"What for now, miss?"

"To get my fine clothes, and," holding up her finger, "to get George's."

The old woman turned blue with rage, and chewed with her mouth, as if she had some imaginary substance between her teeth.

The child, however, nothing daunted by such signs, continued, still holding up that finger,

"The captain says so, *mind*:" and so the clothes were produced, the walk was taken; and George's cheeks showed, when they returned, two delicate little roses, that lingered for a half-hour, and then faded away, never again to be renewed by human love.

In the night after this walk, Helen heard a bustle, as of some one leaving the house; and not long after, the measured lingering sound of "Yo, yo, heave yo," that she well knew

betokened some departing vessel. She felt truly, that the captain was going back to the village—that he would soon see those whom she had always loved and honoured—and her thoughts, like lead, weighed her down, pressing heavily upon her heart.

The feeling of desolation she now felt, drew her nearer than ever in sympathy to poor George; who, she saw as soon as she came down the next morning into the little back shed, was engaged in scouring it out.

Poor child, she was but nine years old. She had on a homespun dress, gathered upon the hips with a string. Her legs were bare to the knees; and they, with her little feet, were as white as a curd; and the little blue veins looked as if they were pencilled on the surface. As Helen reached the bottom of the staircase, she heard the last lingering squeak of a sharp instrument, saying, "You sha'n't have a *bit of breakfast* until you finish that piazza."

Miserere! now was the beginning of trouble; and it took all of poor Helen's ingenuity, to get enough to eat, and to keep out of the whirlwind. She was talked *at* often enough, but she pretended not to notice it—indeed, she felt *above* the atmosphere that such a woman could create; and experienced greater happiness than she could rob her of, by her turbulent and suspicious spirit.

With the "little h-Ann," Helen tried assiduously to create a change of sentiment and character: but her perception of truth and honesty was very faint, for what she may have had intuitively, had been bent like a twig continually, to the pressure of deceit, hypocrisy, and a hard-hearted parsimonious spirit of selfishness.

The only spirit that remained in the child, that seemed to link her with humanity, was her interest in George; and her cunning plans for relieving her of hard work, were only admissible, on the unsound principle of "doing evil, that good may come."

The only pleasant labour which the child had to perform, was going down to gather coarse sand from the shelving bluff we have already described, by lantern-light; and Ann, to make this necessary as often as possible, would steal away the sand and scatter it about, or throw it away, so that George would have to go off for more. Ann always went with her whenever she could; and here, they always met other little sand-gatherers and idlers, both black and white, forming a most prolific soil for the growth of wild and evil weeds.

Yet, this sand could not be dispensed with, for it was an absolute essential in Mistress Ludovico's housekeeping—perhaps because she had always lived near this bluff; and everybody used it for sanding their kitchen floors. A very wise plan it was, but it makes one shudder to think of the fatal termination of poor George's sand-gatherings.

When Mistress Ludovico had fidgeted herself out of the way one day, Ann ran down the bluff with George, because there were to be a great many children there that morning, and they intended to have a great deal of sport. They knew that Mistress Ludovico never went after them there, because the shipping was so near by; and to have encountered the rude gaze under the bluff, would have compromised too much the dignity of her lace frills, and the quiet tinkling of her little pendent hearts. Metaphorically speaking, she had ascended from under the bluff when she married the captain; and she would not now, by any means, have the unpleasant position in the past brought to her mind.

To aid her in this laudable attempt of always looking up, there was the French Revolution, which had succeeded in rooting up old families, and turning them topsy-turvy into the midst of the common herd of mankind. Blessed revolution this was, for Mistress Ludovico; because now, without fear in this republican country of having to bring proof of the fact, she claimed to be descended from the old "French

Noblesse," and she was always certain of its giving her eclat in any society in which she could associate.

As to notoriety—Mistress Ludovico could not be known without possessing it. She was notorious for everything but an honest and quiet tongue.

But we must return to our subject, which, as we have already hinted, is deeply tinged with sadness. Mistress Ludovico was just coming along the narrow pavement to enter the house, and Helen was up stairs reading, when they heard a loud outcry from the bluff. They saw a crowd collecting, and heard the dreadful words, "The bluff has caved in upon the children."

The mother seemed to awake instantly in the woman's heart, for Mistress Ludovico ran down with eager haste.

Soon Helen also had thrown down her book, and the first thing she knew, was standing on the top of the bluff, looking down with the greatest anxiety upon the scene below.

O! how intense were those moments of anxious suspense! How concentrated the agony of tender mothers, who, with every gasping breath, seemed suffocating in sympathy with those buried forms. But there, too, was sympathy of action, as well as sympathy of feeling. Man in his true prerogative of strength was there, and not one moment was lost—child after child was liberated from the choking, suffocating grave. Little Ann was among the first taken out, and laid almost lifeless in her mother's arms; but the distracted woman cried out, "Where is George? George! don't leave George here! I didn't send her here to die!"

"There is no life left in anybody here, ma'am, I assure you," said one of the men; "and it's no use, in my opinion, to dig any more."

"Give me room here, then," said a young man, who from the first had been the most active and untiring among them; "Give me your place—there is but one more here, they say; and I will not leave until she is taken out."

Helen took Ann from her mother's arms, who seemed now

almost crazed by the pressure of that conscience which had been slumbering profoundly ; and going up to the house with her, laid her on the trundle bed. She bathed her face with cold water, and she soon revived ; and though a deadly paleness came over it at times, it seemed to be more from terror, and a few drops of cold water soon revived her thoroughly into life.

George was not long after brought up by the same young gentleman who extricated her ; and laid beside Ann, who still lay subdued and silent on the bed.

Cold and corpse-like was that breathless little body, that showed no signs of life, except a slight pulsation. The doctor succeeded in restoring her to a conscious existence ; but, alas ! never to physical life in its full, sweet sense.

She lingered for days ; sometimes reviving sufficiently to talk sweetly to those around her ; and then again, struggling with an oppression, that seemed always to be a contest between life and death. And so it proved at last, and death conquered, laying her out in pale and shrouded beauty before their eyes ; and then hiding her away in the cold, dark embraces of the grave.

There are often stranger things in truth than in fiction ; and as strange and unexpected as it may seem, this little child formed a singular link in the development of our narrative.

The young gentleman who extricated her from the earth, was Adonis Joyce.

By this act he had aroused the best feelings of Mistress Ludovico, whose better nature seemed to have been thoroughly excited by the event. She confessed to him in the first moments of her awakened conscience, that she had "despised the child from the first day she came there, because her husband seemed so devoted to her, she thought she might come in for a share of their property." Thus, in a moment of impulsive confidence, this woman had displayed the foundation of her character, her mean, mercenary spirit.

"But did not your husband tell you who she was?" said Adonis.

"Yes, her name he said was Georgia Lennox, the child of a poor sailor, picked up on the coast somewhere; but I didn't see why he should be so taken with the child for all that. As soon as he came home, it was always 'Where is George, poor thing!'"

"And this excited your jealousy and hatred against the child—this innocent, gentle-looking little being?"

"Yes, sir; I will confess to you as I would to my priest, because you have saved her life. (I doubt very much if she would have said so much if she had thought she was going to die.) Yes, sir, I felt sometimes as if I could have choked her, when I was obliged to be kind to her, because the captain was here. Yes, when he went away"—and she wept and shook her head, and rocked from side to side. The inner corners of her eyebrows were drawn up; and long, yellow ripples played convulsively around them. Poor thing, she expended a world of sympathy then, considering it was Mistress Ludovico, who always hung out false signs, namely, the two little shaking hearts—shaking but not tender.

"Yes, when he went away, my greatest delight was to torment that child."

"Torment her? How did you do that?"

"When she was in pain I laughed at it. I made her work in pain, until she could bear it no longer, and," she continued with intense feeling, "I used to work her, and starve her. God help me, my heart had a devil in it, sir."

"But, why did you work her at all? I see you have a plenty of servants."

"Yes, sir, but they were mine, and I indulged them. I have even made her do the meanest offices for them, to mortify her. O, sir, I have been a wretch!"

Poor George lay that day apparently unconscious of what was passing.

Helen gazed upon the woman, as she opened the windows of her soul, that they might look within, with blanched cheeks and hands clasped over the pale little one that lay passive on the coverlet. Adonis Joyce's head bent thoughtfully forward, listening intently; and his mind seemed to be most painfully exercised.

Another day, and but one more scene we will describe, before the little spirit took its flight; and this was soon after the captain's return home.

He stood at the foot of the bed, and gazed upon the pale little form that lay extended before him. The tears rolled over his rough brown cheeks, and dropped down upon the thick beaver pea-jacket that covered his kind and tender heart. All he said was,

"And this is the way, George Lennox, that I have performed my promise to you!"

Soon after, Adonis Joyce, who had entered the room with an elderly gentlemen, touched his arm, and said,

"Captain Ludovico, allow me to introduce to you my father, Mr. Joyce."

"Joyce—Joyce," said the captain, looking around with surprise; "I am happy to see you, Mr. Joyce."

"My father has some reason to suppose, captain," said Adonis, "that this little girl is a connexion of his; and would like, as soon as you can compose yourself, to hear something respecting her father."

"It will not take me long to do that, sir," said the captain. "In cruising around, after a dreadful hurricane, to the village where I trade, I came across a small canoe-boat in Ossabaw Sound, which we almost run over in consequence of the rough water. I saw that something like a living being was in the bottom of it; and hauled to, as well as we could. The waves were running so high, we could scarcely succeed; but, as it happened, the tide was setting in, and so, by sending the boat, we at last got them into the vessel. They proved to be George

Lennox and this poor child. Her name was Georgia, but I have always called her George since his death, which happened a year ago. But you want, sir, to hear something of him. He and his family had been living on a small island, subsisting on fish and wild game, and what little provision they could raise for themselves. The hurricane I mentioned had covered this island, washing everything away.

"The way he and this child were saved, was, that they were together gathering oysters; and they were never able again, from the violence of the winds, to reach their hut. They were beat about by the tide, sometimes in sight of the island, where they saw no vestige of their humble home, and again carried out nearly into the ocean, and out of sight of land."

"Did he tell you anything of his life, sir?" asked Mr. Joyce.

"Never, sir, until he was on his death-bed. He served with me in my vessel until he died, which was about a year ago. He told me, then, that he was a native of Virginia, and that he had been very wild and dissipated when he was a youth. That he had a sister who had driven him to it, by making his home miserable to him; and that she was always telling his father lies about him. These were all the relations he spoke of. He said that his father was not a rich man, though he had some property; and when he returned, after his death, to get his portion of it, his sister told him it was all left to her, and that he should not have a dollar."

"Did he never hear," said the old gentleman, "what became of that sister?"

"Yes; he said he heard that she had married a rich man, by the name of Joyce, in Virginia; and that she had got to be a great lady, riding in a fine carriage, seeing a great deal of company, and doing as she pleased."

"Did he tell you anything more?"

"Yes, sir; he said, just before he breathed his last, 'Per-

haps, if you will try and find them out, captain, they may some of them be kind to poor George.' "

"I am the man, sir," said Mr. Joyce, "who married that lady. The name of my second wife was Georgia Lennox. What her own brother has stated of her temper was strictly true. She was the torment of others, and the ruin of herself. And here," said the old gentleman, with feeling, "let me give a lesson and warning to others. Here is an instance of that retribution, both mental and moral, which always follows the course of such duplicity. That woman is now in the Lunatic Asylum, from the effects of that temper which was unsubdued and allowed to riot on the tenderest and finest feelings of the heart. She"—and here his voice choked with emotion; and Adonis, with his hands before his eyes, could not conceal the tears that trickled down his cheeks—"she destroyed my only daughter, by her cruel temper and her diabolical deceit; and this, the only relation that I know of hers on earth, has had very much the same treatment from your wife."

"My wife—Mistress Ludovico? impossible!"

"Nay, sir, by her own acknowledgment, she has tormented her. She has given her hard tasks; she has exulted in her pain when she has been suffering; and she has starved her."

"My God, sir! is it possible? Have I been so blind?"

"There are none so blind as those who will not see," said the old gentleman, hastily. "But excuse me," he added, as he saw the distress of the captain; "I have been as blind—blinder than you; for I was a father—you but a friend. I would gladly have returned good for evil; for, having now no daughter, I would fain have taken this one and sheltered her from the rude storms of life."

"And this, sir, is all my fault. My business is such that I am almost always away from home; but, hearing that a Mr. Joyce had removed to Savannah, I have been intending to call, and see if there was any connexion—but it is now too late."

"Poor George!" said the captain, weeping afresh; "your

friends are here, but you don't know it." She raised her little hand and laid it on his head, as he bent over her—and so she died. A smile rested on her lips in parting, as if to express to him her love and gratitude; and, to all who had known her in her last illness, it seemed like the smile of an angel.

CHAPTER XXX.

ADONIS JOYCE had, during the illness of Georgia Lennox, been daily admitted to her bedside.

His interest in her, perhaps, was at first the sole cause of his attention; but, finding very soon that Helen was the presiding spirit there, and that he could make himself useful by relieving her, he was always regular in his calls. He sometimes induced her to go and take some rest, while he nursed the delicate little sinking being before him. Often when she was strong enough to speak, he communed with her in a gentle tone; and then he found that in truth, though that little being's mortal life was fast ebbing away, there was a brighter life growing up within her, and shining out from her resigned and happy heart.

This was all through Helen's influence, who, with her trust in God, and a patient adherence to the first promptings of conscience, and the first impulse of her generous heart, had gone forward quietly in the work of reformation. Her ministrations had been like dew, distilled noiselessly upon the soul, refreshing and purifying, without startling.

Little Ann, also, who had been thoroughly frightened into submission, had but a vestige left of that bantering, impudent manner. One would scarcely have supposed that such a little imp could have been "clothed, and in her right mind," in so short a time.

We could describe many interesting scenes connected with this period ; but these will already find a painful response in the heart of some afflicted parent, and we hasten on.

It would have been stranger than fiction indeed, if Adonis Joyce could have witnessed such beauty, such grace, and such refined elegance as Helen Rose possessed, day after day, without being touched by it. And when he knew, in addition to this, that she was as good as beautiful, and that without ostentation, he would have proved himself a nut without a kernel—a valueless heart, clothed in triple bars of steel—if he had not felt her influence himself.

But this was not so. Adonis Joyce was a man of feeling, for we have already witnessed it ; and he felt, that in Helen's heart, there was a deep fountain—hidden it might be, but all the more precious—from the deep shadows amid which it had gushed up, to gladden the heart of a lowly child. Besides this, his was a truly practical mind, and here he had seen the practical influence of a principle, and the practical results of exertion. He felt himself ready to exclaim, “Almost thou persuadest me to be a Christian.”

But we must pass on to the rest of our narrative.

The day after the funeral, Helen was sad and thoughtful ; and, apart from the care she took on her mind of little Ann, she had nothing now to keep her thoughts from reverting to her own sorrows. Her mind wandered on the past, and she thought, “I would like very much to see Mr. Joyce again to-day ; there is something about little Ann, I would like to consult with him about. Besides, I have seen him every day lately ; and it seems so natural to see him, and so unnatural to give up the idea of seeing him altogether again.”

But she did not have to give up that pleasure ; for even while she was thinking, his step was heard on the pavement. The only difference of his approach was, that instead of turning the lock, and coming in, as he did when George was ill, he knocked for admittance, and asked for Miss Rose.

Mistress Ludovico was seated, in morning costume, in the sitting-room adjoining; and we will leave Helen and Adonis for a time, and make our last call upon herself and the "little h-Ann." Her appearance was more subdued than ever before, since her elevation from under the bluff. She looked as if she had done penance, and been absolved. Her cap-strings were actually tied under her chin, and being of wide lace, they passed over the ear-rings, keeping the little hearts quiet, without hiding them from view. She was more quietly engaged also than usual, for she was embroidering, on a piece of silk canvass, a little bag for Ann.

Ann was seated on the top of a table near her elbow, having reached it by a chair. The little creature seemed to be made of the most volatile parts of matter—so light, so agile, and so effervescent were all her movements. Now, her little feet, encased in silk stockings and coloured kid slippers, having straps tied with bright ribbon, were crossed in front of her, while across her lap she was assorting the coloured silks from her mother's basket. Her arched eyebrows indicated a regard for colours; and she took particular pleasure in those, because they were soft as well as bright. If she had grown up there, she might have learned to think that the gaudy colouring of the paper, the red and yellow fruit in the plaster baskets, the gaudy curtain linings, and the rose-coloured cupids flying about, were as beautiful as rays of light. Thus it is, that nature is so often thwarted in her beautiful designs.

These observations of domestic life there, could be had at one glance; and the impression received that Mistress Ludovico was still a very *smart woman*. Her priest, whether mentally or orally, her priest, whether priest of God or priest of the devil, had absolved her of the acknowledged sin of the heart, the sin of cruelty to the dead child.

The acknowledgment of this had brought her pardon with herself, "because," she said, "have I not crucified myself?"

This "flattering unction" had purified her from the past, and given her a new lease for the future.

Ann's ruling passion was dress, dress, dress. She would have been satisfied to wear "rings on her fingers, and bells on her toes," like the old woman of "Bunbury cross," if they had been made of gold and set with precious stones. This passion had been sleeping since the sad event we have mentioned, in which time Ann's whole manner and bearing had improved wonderfully. Now it was awaking again, which only a glimpse at her countenance was sufficient to show.

"I will carry you to the French church next Sunday, Ann; and you can put your money for the poor in this pretty little bag."

"No, I shan't go there, though. What must I go there for?"

"To show yourself, to be sure—your pretty bag and your fine clothes."

"No, I shan't, though; I shall go with the captain to the Mariners' Church, thank you, ma'am."

"There won't be anybody there to look at you," replied the mother, provoked at her defeat so far; but the cunning of the serpent was not lost yet, and as the child made her reply, and acted her little pantomime, the utmost artifice of that wily animal was betrayed in her glistening eyes.

"They will all think me pretty and fine, though; and I will tell you how I will walk up the aisle—you want to see?" and jumping down in a moment from the table, she paraded the floor, turning her head from side to side, and saying, "just so, just so; see, Johanna?"

This climax seemed to give the mother most perfect satisfaction, for she leaned forward to the child, as if she would have embraced her, and said,

"You love to look pretty and fine, don't you?"

"To be sure I do; don't you, Johanna?"

"You haven't got a star to wear in your forehead yet, have

you?" said the tempter, suddenly holding up a jewel that glittered like diamonds, as she turned it from side to side.

"No," said the sprite, springing to her mother's side. "Is this for me?"

"If you will go to the French church with me, and dip your hands in the holy water."

"Where did it come from, Johanna?" said the child, attentively examining it with her little cunning black eyes.

"French noblesse, French noblesse," said the woman, with animation, muttering a mongrel French patois to explain their illustrious descent, of which this, she said, was one of the relics.

"French noblesse!" said Ann, with a scornful turn of her thin red upper lip. "French fiddlesticks! You see anything green here?" she said, putting the fore finger of her left hand on the outer corner of her left eye.

"What do you mean, miss?" said the woman, thoroughly astonished.

"I mean," said Ann, holding the jewel firmly in her right hand, and pointing to it with her left, "I mean that this was George's, and you took it from her;" but the last part of the sentence had to be finished while she sprang to the door.

Mistress Ludovico had jumped to seize her, but Ann, springing out with a light bound, was received into the arms of her father, who was just entering the room. He saw the rage, the agitation, and the jewel. He knew the latter well, for it was fastened with a cord on George's neck when she was picked up from the canoe.

He thus found out what a deep mine of corruption was spreading around and under him, and was the means of saving whatever there was good in Ann's nature, for he removed her from the influence of one in whom hatred, hypocrisy, envy, and vanity formed the groundwork of character.

We had no idea of leaving Helen and Adonis so long with-

out returning to them, but they have had a good opportunity of renewing an old acquaintance.

"You were a very mischievous little girl, Miss Rose. Are you so, now?"

"Most assuredly, not *now*," said Helen, and a tear suffused her eyes.

"You would not steal a little *monkey*, would you?" he said with a sly smile.

"A *monkey*!" said Helen, starting with surprise. "Mercy on me, have I not seen you before, and in a different character? It must be—the voice is the same."

"When and where was it?"

"At home—when I was happy."

"Yes, you saw me there, but you were not happy then. The clouds were gathering before that, and you then felt their chilling influence. Was this not so?"

"O yes," said the poor girl, bending her head down on her hands and weeping, "I know it now—I feel it—I am friendless."

"On the contrary, were you not told to *trust*? that there were loving hearts waiting—watching—hoping for you?"

"This is too mysterious, too singular," said Helen, thoughtfully. "Mr. Joyce," she continued, rising with dignity, "if this subject admits of explanation now, I shall be most happy to hear it. If it does not, I must beg to be excused, and hold myself in readiness to receive it whenever it does."

"I beg your pardon, Miss Rose," said Mr. Joyce respectfully, "for deferring the explanation, which if circumstances had permitted I would gladly have given before. There is a mystery involving your life which you are ignorant of as yet; but it is one, believe me, that will only render it more bright once that veil is removed."

"Why did you, sir, come disguised to my father's house?"

"Because my agency was solicited by other members of your family."

"Other members of my family! surely there were none who could feel the interest of a father in me?"

"There were others who thought they had a right to the same interest from him."

"How can you so cruelly excite my wonder, and not gratify my desire to know more on this subject?" said Helen, with an imploring countenance.

"If you think you are able to bear it, I will tell you all I know," said Adonis. "Do you remember some interesting strangers who visited Mr. Elliot's, from Cuba?"

"I do; and I remember that I was entranced, charmed, delighted with them."

"They have reason to believe that they are near relatives of yours; indeed there is no doubt of it."

"O, is it possible?" said Helen, with animation; "then there will be somebody who can love me!"

"Yes, and now I will tell you how I have acted my part in it, and why. When going to voyage south, Mr. Elliot gave me letters to them, saying at the same time, that if I could be of service to them in any way he knew I would oblige them."

He then narrated to Helen all that he had told Mr. Rose in the jail—of his visit to the estate in Cuba, of the bamboo thicket, the hut, the old woman, of Isabella Rosco, and the history of the stolen child. He told her what Mr. Rose did not wait to hear, namely, that a message had been received by the old nurse Aminta from some mysterious source, to the effect that her "mistress's child was alive, and in Georgia."

"This had fixed the conviction on Miss Rosco's mind that you were that child, and I was appealed to, by the force of a tie that I can never resist, to aid in developing the tangled web. This was my reason for entering your house in disguise."

"Go on—go on," said Helen.

"My feelings were enlisted from the first most entirely. I knew that if there was nothing to excite suspicion, it would pass off harmlessly; and if there was, that in the end, it might

be the means of conferring exquisite happiness on a devoted sister."

"Sister! did you say sister?"

"Yes—sister. Are you able to hear more? And brother," added Adonis, with the kindest voice and manner. "I will tell you no more now—this is almost too much for you—tomorrow you must see, as well as hear."

"Is this beyond a doubt? Have I really a brother and a sister? or do I dream?"

"No, you do not dream; really and truly you have a brother and a sister; and to-morrow your brother will be in this place, and here with you."

Adonis left her with her head bent down upon both of her beautiful palms, weeping and sobbing as if her heart would break: but they were sweet, refreshing tears; like the April shower, that clears up, leaving the rainbow of hope, spanning the vast heavens.



CHAPTER XXXI.

WE will not linger any longer with Helen at Captain Ludovico's, but herald her arrival as Miss Rosco, at the Pulaski, with her brother Gonzalez.

What a meeting was this—indescribable, therefore passed over in silence—between two persons so nearly related; and yet, who never had met but once before! Helen had been born and lost, while Gonzalez was in England at school; and this accounted for that remark of his sister's to him, at Mr. Elliot's: namely, "that never having seen her, perhaps he viewed her as a creature of the imagination."

"But *my sister*—our sister, Gonzalez, when shall I see her?"

"Ho! for the sunny south," said Gonzalez, embracing her

"with my bright and beautiful bird. Any one might have known that such plumage as this," taking up a handful of auburn tinted ringlets, and kissing them, "was made for the tropics."

"But our sister, Gonzalez, when shall I see her?" said the beautiful creature, putting back the hair from his polished brow, and kissing it. "I do long to see her, with my whole soul."

"Why! Isa would be here now, if she knew of half our success. I arrived here yesterday, just on a kind of reconnoitring tour, when to my surprise, that prince of conjurors, Adonis Joyce, told me we had found a jewel, worth the mines of Golconda."

"Where is your friend Mr. Joyce? I have not seen him to-day."

"He has gone back to the village to see Mr. Elliot, and to settle some preliminaries," said Gonzalez.

"Ah!" said Helen, coldly, and she turned slightly away. "He is very much attached"—and she hesitated—"to Mr. Elliot's family—is he not?"

"Not to *every* member of it, I hope, my sweet sister. I hope he does not love Miss Anna; for if he does, he is gone on a very fruitless mission."

"How so, Gonzalez? Is he not engaged to Anna?"

"No, that he is not! and as you are my little sister, I will tell you a secret—I am engaged to her *myself*."

"Is it possible?" said Helen, and now her face was suffused with blushes.

The visit alluded to, occupies the next chapter; in which, towards the end, there is a glimmering of further light.

CHAPTER XXXII.

ADONIS JOYCE was a relative of Mr. Elliot's, and for several years before his majority had been his ward. Mr. Allan Joyce, his father, having had domestic troubles, that for several years had made him a desperate man, had entreated Mr. Elliot to consent to this arrangement; saying, "I am crushed beyond hope of reaction—my heart lies buried in the grave of the past."

Now, years had passed over, and the relief had come, and the reaction. The relief was exhibited in the calm sunshine of settled hopes that rested on his fine and manly brow. It beamed from within, outwardly, with a deep, vivid, and enduring light: not flickering up one moment with a brilliant glow, to sink the next into a deeper and darker gloom; but shining out upon all around with that true reaction which love in the soul secures to man. There was a shadow still, as we have already heard, clinging around his heart; but there was none within it. From that sanctuary all shadows had been dispelled for ever, by the redeeming light of the "Sun of Righteousness."

Every human mind has to be taught by some mental process its self-dependence, as regards the world; and its entire dependence on God, as regards spiritual things, before it can fix its hope and trust above the world. And when that self-dependence becomes to the mind a settled fact, leading to the result, "What shall *I* do to be saved?" "What wilt thou have *me* to do?" and the dependence on God combines with it, forming a firm base, a beautiful and well-proportioned foundation for hope and thought, elevating it, and bringing it under the sweet influences of the spirit of grace, *then*, washed, and made clean—and endued with a new principle of life, it

becomes truly independent; independent in everything but love, peace, and good-will to men.

Adonis was his only child, his only earthly comfort and stay; and he was so in every sense of the word. If respect, love, and admiration ever beamed from the heart through the eyes; and, if the silent homage of a loved one ever fell like blessed sunshine on the heart, then Adonis Joyce gave, and Allan Joyce received, day by day, when together, this homage and this sunshine.

Adonis Joyce was not a man of many words, or of much profession; but strictly speaking, a man of business, and of action. Without lingering long by the way, we will take a hasty glance at his past life.

By the influence of his stepmother he had been sent to Boston, and put in the counting-house of one of her friends. Here you may be sure he received no favours; but, by the aid of the strict discipline, the determined will and unflinching integrity of his character shone out; so that when he left there to return home on his first visit, four years after his entrance, he commanded the respect of his employer. He had then been separated from his sister for six years, she having been sent, two years before he left home, to Bethlehem, to finish her education. After she went from home, he only heard from her through Mrs. Joyce, the excuse being, that they allowed only a limited number of letters to be written, and those very formal, subject to the correction of the teacher.

This privation weighed like lead upon his heart, and was gradually developing too rebellious a spirit to be retained near so wily a woman: therefore, *for his good entirely*, she proposed the plan we have mentioned. It did prove for his good in the formation of a well-disciplined mind; but there could be no thanks due her, for kindness of intention. It was rather an overruling of that Providence, that "sees the end from the beginning;" and had yet in store a rich blessing for those who should trust in Him.

Ella Joyce, as we have been told how and when, had flown like a bird to her rest, and taking refuge in the home of the soul, was secure from the ills of earth. Her spirit, gentle and enduring, seemed to linger around the loved and "long-parted" ones, for they too had become gentle and enduring.

After the shock of her death had passed, and, like a hurricane in its violence, had upturned the tenderest roots of love, Adonis paused not in his onward course, but received new impetus from the inward anguish of his mind.

We will not dwell upon his home; that was sad and sorrowful enough. The path of the hurricane there had been deep and serried. No green leaves were left upon those fallen and prostrate limbs. The tempest of feeling had swept them away, and nought was left but the bare and bleeding bark, to tell of the desolation that had passed over them.

He devoted himself to study, and, as we have seen, succeeded in obtaining honours. He then, in a much shorter time than any one could imagine, prepared himself for the bar, to which he was admitted without difficulty. These different engagements had occupied him six years, and in that time the tempest and the hurricane had passed by, leaving a clear and serene sky. Concluding to remain altogether in Georgia, he established his head quarters in Savannah, and his father having now no particular attachment to Virginia, soon made up his mind to remove there also.

I have said nothing about the property; but what is property to one with such a mind and spirit as he possessed? It would stop *him*, just as soon in his onward course, as gravity would stop a comet. Will—power—motion—these were the true attributes of such a soul, and their exercise the very elements of his existence. Money was but the representative, to him, of the plodding, greedy, fussy care of the world: but his life has proved that he possessed the magician's wand of success; facts speak for themselves. Yet he was not without property; therefore, before entering upon the busy cares of the

year, he concluded to take a voyage among the Islands of the South.

This happened not very long after the visit of the Roscos to Mr. Elliot's; and to them Mr. Elliot gave him a letter of introduction, with an intimation to them, that, if they could enlist his feelings in their cause, he would discover anything that was discoverable. In the mean time, Jack, the tall black servant we have before mentioned, had compromised his secrecy to Mr. Rose by an increased affection for the children of his old master, thus unexpectedly brought before his mind; and had sent a message to his mother, old Aminta, respecting the existence of the long-lost, the youngest child.

We have seen the result of these efforts, so far; too romantic almost to be believed; but still not out of the range of human events, as the heart of that sad and sorrowing girl testified, in the dark and desolate cabin of the "America." And it is true also that it opened for her, though shrouded in gloom, a bright and happy future.

These circumstances were yet only known to a few; for the great problem of who was Mr. Rose, was yet to be solved. Whether the father of Helen, remarried and dishonoured?—this, you will understand, was the damning thought of Gonzalez, that fired his brain, making him almost dread to search for a solution—or, whether, attracted by the surpassing beauty of the child, he had taken her to gratify the passion for a pet. In this case, they would have exulted—given him absolution for all the past.

This was now the real purpose of Adonis's visit; and, in course of time, we will find out with what success.

Before proceeding further, we will give a short sketch of the Rosco family, dwelling only on such incidents as are necessary to the development of this narrative.

There had been three brothers, by the name of Rosco, who were natives of Spain. They were very wealthy; and, in addition to what they owned in their own country, were possessed of

large estates in St. Domingo. They were neither titled nor distinguished, excepting for their power as money-lenders, their gentlemanly deportment, and their love of enterprise. This last distinction was the more remarkable in them, as the spirit seemed to have died out in the nation for a century or more.

The eldest brother went to England, and, in course of time, married the daughter of a nobleman, Lady Georgiana Grenville, by whom he had one son. This son was left an orphan, was raised in England, and became, when old enough, an officer in the English army. His name was Grenville Rosco.

The second brother settled in Havana, and, marrying a rich Creole, had one son, who was also left an orphan.

The third brother was sent officially to Baltimore, and married there a fair American. They lived in Baltimore for a few years, and then removed to the Spanish part of St. Domingo, where they all owned estates. Their only child was a daughter, as fair and beautiful as her mother, possessing all her physical traits, with her father's ardent and devoted nature. This daughter was named Estella; and contrasted so strongly with the dark beauties of the islands, that she was called the Star of the Antilles.

The Creole youth soon found a home in the family of his uncle; but from being very independent in circumstances, he was also very independent in action. That love of enterprise which had brought his father from his own native land, became, in his warm Creole nature, love of adventure, variety, excitement. Freely and luxuriously he ever lived, enjoying life in every varied form; on the water and on the land; in the hunt and in the dance; in the wild retreat of the mountain gorges, and in the valleys, surrounded with every form of romantic beauty. Self-indulgence was Francisco's idol, and he worshipped it with every faculty of an ardent and impetuous nature.

The only refined touch in his nature, as he grew up to manhood, was the love he felt for his cousin Estella Rosco. It

had grown with his growth and strengthened with his strength; yet this love was so supremely selfish in its manifestations, that it had never excited a return. Nor should it seem strange, that there, with the warm breath of that sunny clime fanning his dark and fervid cheek—there, amidst scenes where luxurious life gives ever forth fresh types for thoughts, and fresh impetus to man's ardent and impetuous longings—his nature should have imbibed and cherished a passion in its wildest and most absorbing sense.

Like the luxurious vegetation of those tropic isles, the physical being rushes forward to full, expansive, vigorous life. The trees and clinging vines rest in wild beauty, inhaling the balmy breath, or imbibing the gentle moisture of the seas; they clamber up beyond the reach of man, throwing their tendrils up ever higher and higher into the blue, still, dreamy air; or the gigantic limbs reaching out, bear their honours in the open canopy of heaven. So, physically, man expands into life; woman matures into being—one like the gigantic tree, the other like a clinging vine; and soon they overleap the reach of those, who having been as they are, are now sinking down into the vale; mentally they truly vegetate, and thus, like their own climate of storms or sunshine, of tempest or of breathless calm, their minds present the extremes of apathy or interest, of inertia or excitement.

But, however this love of Francisco's had grown and expanded, blending with every feeling of his soul, still the monopoly of selfishness ever asserted its entire sway, and only while this love ministered to his excitement would he dwell within its circle. If she was sought by others, he stayed near to watch with jealous care; but the moment she was left alone, he sought again the master passion of his soul, the roving life of the sea. Estella possessed refined and cultivated feelings. They were hers by inheritance, and heightened by the polished society, and the refined finish that had been given to her manners and education, in Baltimore. But, however cul-

tivated or polished, nothing could have changed the preponderance of feeling in her nature; and therefore, if she had been unfortunate enough to have returned his passion, she would have felt most keenly the rude demonstrations of his love when present, and the ruder neglects of his absence.

Devoted to a roving life, and owning a vessel, he came and went at pleasure—always unexpectedly; and when absent, gave no tidings of himself. Whenever he returned, he was always received with pleasure, and treated by Estella with the unreserved affection of a sister. Yet notwithstanding this, Francisco never suspected that the love which he cherished as the only home tie, the one bright link that was eventually to sober him down to a regular citizen's life, was not reciprocated in full by the "bright particular star" of his selection. He went once on an expedition of several months to South America; and when he returned, which he always did without any notice, he saw that the house was illuminated, and that within there was revelry and dancing. Thinking to surprise them by his sudden appearance, he went around to his usual quarter to attire himself suitably for the occasion; and about this he felt the more solicitude, as he had made up his mind to make a formal proposal to his cousin, and to seal his fate as a married man.

Fatal moment for that selfishness, which had ruled him with an iron rod, poisoning every faculty of his mind, every feeling of his soul! The proud man recoiled when he heard that this was Estella's wedding night.

Concentrated rage and astonishment consumed, for a few moments, every energy of mind and body; but his strong, resolute, and determined will, soon gained entire ascendancy. He told his servant to follow him, and they glided forth like dark spirits, from among the lights, the beauty, the revelry, and the joy of the farm palace. They sought the dark shadows of the overhanging bamboos, and for a few brief moments one told and the other received information.

Grenville Rosco had unexpectedly been stationed in Jamaica, and getting a furlough, had visited his uncle's family. The attachment of the cousins seemed to be of spontaneous growth, for only three months had passed and this was their wedding night.

Francisco Rosco rose and bade his servant follow him, saying in a low deep tone: "You have witnessed this evening what no eye has ever seen, not even that star that *dares* to beam for another. Yes, *dares*!" he repeated with vehemence, holding up his arm and gritting his teeth in agony and rage. "You shall never leave me again, and by heaven, you shall witness my *revenge*."

He returned to his vessel, raised anchor, and was only seen at brief intervals after this in his old haunts on the island of St. Domingo.

Estella's presence was so necessary to her father, and the climate of her birth so necessary to her existence, that General Rosco requested he might have as permanent a command as possible in Jamaica. They had made one visit to England, leaving with a maiden aunt their eldest child, Gonzalez.

During the continuance of the Peninsular war they were located in Jamaica, where Isabella was born. As soon as peace was declared they returned to St. Domingo, and to the old homestead, where they found that Mr. Rosco, though uncomplaining, was exhibiting the wear and tear of constant exertion, and an enervating climate. Their youngest child was born amid the beauties and delights of her own island home. Sad tears soon dissipated her smiles of welcome, for General Rosco was ordered to the East Indies for an indefinite time. We cannot linger on the scene. His honour and patriotism urged him forward, and his isolation during the Peninsular war now inspired him with a desire to share the glory which others had acquired. He named the infant Estella, after her mother; and with his blessing, left them, as he thought, with the fairest prospects of safety and of happiness.

They heard of him once from the Cape of Good Hope—a hasty despatch, and then never again.

In a few months, the population, incited by the neighbouring government, rose in rebellion. It was at night, and a solemn silence reigned in that house where all was once revelry and mirth. The master was dead; and there, in the wide hall, he lay shrouded in spotless white; around were verandahs sloping down low to lessen the heat of the noonday sun, or to ward off the heavy evening dews. Once they had been lit up from rafter to joist with festoons of lamps, reflecting every ray of the prism, and far beyond, even from limb to limb, the same joyous rays sent their glad light, a symbol of the overflowing life and joy within. Now the silence fell heavily. No moving thing was seen excepting the flaring of the tapers, and the gentle waving of the drapery of the dead in the evening breeze. No sound was heard excepting the deep breathing of the watchers, who sat with their heads bowed down upon their knees, and their white turbans as motionless as a bank of snow on the bosom of the broad earth; everything now symbolized the death-like silence of the tomb.

Estella entered the room, and looked more fair and lovely than when she bloomed a maiden flower in the home of her childhood. Then she was bright and joyous in hope; a flower blooming on the parterre. Now her hopes were lying blighted and torn, a lily drooping its pale but beautiful head under the dense shadow of tangled brushwood. An eternal barrier seemed to separate her from the dear loved idol of her affections; her eldest born was away, her father no more, and she left to struggle alone.

“Struggle! alas, to struggle longer is impossible!” she exclaimed, as she bent her knees at the side of the corpse, and sobbed in her bitterness of grief aloud. So absorbed was she with her own sad thoughts she heard not the low murmur of distant voices without, that rose and fell on the evening air. Gathering strength with every moment, nearer they ap-

proached, and at last eyes glared wildly at her around the verandahs, hushed and awed by the solemn scene. But human passions rush wildly upon adamantine rocks, and bear them along in their onward course.

"Stand back! stand back!" was repeated in a loud voice, and then fully aroused, Estella looked up to see a figure passing through the hall, after which she rushed, calling wildly,

"My husband—my husband!"

Then came in the human crowd—at first stealthily; moving as if afraid of death. Then, pressed forward by others, they came nearer and nearer, till the dead man was surrounded by a living human mass. He, passionless and pulseless—they, throbbing with the rage and fury of ignorance and passion. The very breathing of such a mass could be felt; but there was the cry, the muttered oath, the deep execration, while the onward tendency of excited passion impelled them forward.

A sound—shrill, piercing, and despairing, as of a soul in dire extremity—rose above the hoarse murmur of the crowd; and as we often see the passion of one person swaying thousands, so for one brief moment, all sound was hushed in that wild wailing cry.

Then they would have rushed forward; but a tall yellow woman, with snow white hair, standing off in mass around her face, and glaring eyes, scintillating from side to side, with a red and glowing light, stood suddenly before them. An ichneumon lay upon her bosom, while around her right arm was partially wound an enormous serpent. She held it up aloft, and it swayed itself from side to side, lolling out its forked tongue towards the crowd before it.

"Back, miscreants, back!" exclaimed the woman, with rage, while she advanced with a slow and stately tread upon them. "Back, or the dead man's curse be upon you! Back, I say; or the curse of God rest upon you for ever! blight, and mildew, and death! See," she said, pointing to the corpse, as they receded back, and exposed it again to view, "see!

God's death is the good man's friend ; but you shall drink gall, and wormwood, and bitterness, if you dare again to come into this presence !”

She followed them step by step into the verandah ; and they retired, like the surging billow's ebbing tide. She then returned into the hall, and over the dead body of her master waved the living and pliant serpent, as if to throw a charm around the spot.

These mystic rites were meant for eyes that might still be peering at them, from the obscurity beyond. She then passed out again, through the way she had entered.

There, all signs of human life had disappeared. Nowhere were Estella and her children to be found. But Aminta hesitated not in performance of the duty before her.

This is almost all that is necessary to complete the connexion, and we will linger but a moment at the grave of the dead.

Consigned at the midnight hour to the silent tomb, by the singular being we have described—the Aminta of our tale—the old and well-tried servant of his fair and beautiful Baltimorean bride. Others stood around, too—faithful servants of the departed dead, and the departed living.

Secretly, they took their departure for Cuba, through an unknown agent, instructed to convey them to her place of refuge. To Aminta's surprise, the place they went to was almost the counterpart of the place they had left. The terraces, the gardens, the farmhouse, with its wide verandahs, were all alike. And there was the bamboo thicket, with the bamboo cabin by the side of it, awaiting her. But she found her mistress a raving maniac, denouncing her husband as a wretch ; and calling wildly upon him to “bring back my child ! bring back my Estella !”

CHAPTER XXXIII.

AND now, as we have finished the sketch, we will return to the visit of Adonis Joyce to Mr. Elliot's family, which seemingly was one of pleasure. "They," that hundred-headed hydra of social life, said that he was engaged to Anna Young; and that now he was established in business, arrangements were making for the pleasant "finale."

If we only had time to lend a listening ear to the village gossip, we could hear a great deal more on the subject; but as we have been already admitted behind the scenes, we will not delay, even to inquire the news. Appearances, however, favour the gossip; for he and Anna are walking in the piazza, engaged in an animated conversation. No doubt he is describing to her the interesting scenes through which he has passed in his late travels.

He was above the middle height, with a firm-set, well-proportioned figure, more indicative of strength than grace. A manly, open countenance, with truth and energy glowing in his expressive eye; while his brow, being broad as well as high, showed that his mind was well adapted to the practical duties of life—to the solving of problems, and the application of theory, rather than indulging in flights of imagination. Indeed, the most prominent feature in Adonis Joyce's character was freedom from sophistry in argument, and from subtleties in thought. He was truly a human being "without guile," whose creed was simple faith and simple action; so that the conclusions of his mind generally produced action; and, on the contrary, he never acted in matters of importance without full knowledge of his premises. In this was the secret of his success; for already artificial worth had lowered its proud head, and the acted lie had stood out, unveiled in all its enormity, before his firm, truthful, and searching eye.

But if you could have seen Anna's happy countenance, the evening we allude to, and her small and perfect figure, seeming to tread on air, with its light elastic freedom of action, you might have supposed her to be in love; indeed she must have been, to give her that happy, joyous face. Yet, there was not the subdued and downcast look of conscious love; that love, which mingling soul with soul, makes woman's mind repose with confidence, upon that which she feels strong enough to sustain and direct her; while the drooping eye seems to seek the internal world, to contemplate there the sweet spirit-union of sentiment, thought, and feeling.

Anna's eyes beam with animation. She looked up to Adonis, with the freedom and confidence of sisterly regard. She was dressed in a delicate fawn-coloured cambric—simple within itself, but indescribable in its effect. Her complexion, rich and clear, and possessing now more of the rosy tint, was beautifully softened by the pleasing contrast; while it was perfectly adapted to her symmetrical figure, which though small, was perfectly rounded in proportion. It hung gracefully around the skirt, which was trimmed with biassed folds, while it was just short enough to display to advantage, a pair of the most perfect feet imaginable.

I would not have cared to describe her so minutely, only that in anticipation of a promenade, she has thrown a black Spanish mantilla over her silver comb, and falling down on each side, it envelops her partially in its transparent folds.

"Coming events cast their shadows before them, Anna," said Adonis, touching the scarf with a quizzical look.

"It must be a very dark event that casts so black a shadow as this," said Anna, holding up the end of it before her face.

"O! but it is as usual, a transparent shadow, you perceive; for although I only see you through it now, I can see your face actually bathed in rosy light."

"I hope you will not consider that a part of the subject; and, lawyer-like, condemn me to listen to an argument

composed of lights and shadows, to prove that you can make something out of nothing."

"No indeed, excuse me. Never again, till reason is taken captive, and seated on an office-chair, will I presume to attempt an argument, except it may be on the subject of love."

"Thank you, thank you, for the exemption; I have a great horror of lawyer's speeches."

"You congratulate yourself entirely too soon. I have no idea of giving up so interesting a subject," said Adonis, looking at her with admiration. "Truly, Anna, the shadow that has fallen upon you is very becoming; and the rosy light is quite a tell-tale."

"And you have the impudence and cunning of a Philadelphia lawyer; some mysterious influence has intensified your powers of observation, since we met last. Do let me have your last touch on that subject; for you see the green leaves are waving to us, and the joyful breeze is bidding us 'come forth and welcome' to the grassy lawn."

"O, I have nothing more to say; only, that is the kind of head-dress exactly, I saw the high-born Spanish ladies wear, when I was in Cuba. Did you import it from there?" he added quietly, as they walked down the steps.

"What if I condemn you to ungratified curiosity?"

"Then I shall be thrown in shadow myself, with no revenge but the lawyer's—that of cross-questioning."

"'Ye powers and ministers of grace defend us.' I shall confess in preference. It was bestowed upon me as gift, by a high-born Spanish lady, Señora Isabella Rosco."

This afternoon was one among the brightest that a brilliant sky and a verdant earth had ever bestowed on this secluded and beautiful spot. The river and sky are both as blue as ether with its deepest hue can create; the marshes are green, and waving like fields of verdure in the summer air; the "Table of Pines" opposite is so beautiful, that no one who had once seen it could wish it away.

A barren point, running out far into the marsh—so barren as never to have attracted the eye of the agriculturist, is covered with this majestic growth of pine trees, and this beautiful evergreen forest is so even at the top as to have received this title even before our recollection.

The sun being in the west reflects its slanting rays with glaring brilliancy upon the white houses on the opposite shores, while many of the glazed windows reflect them back upon the vision like flames of fire.

The "Bay" is the name given by the villagers to the street running on the river bank, and extending nearly from the old fort to a point at the opposite end of the village. On this street are nine houses, with their gardens between, fronting on the bay.

First, nearest the fort is a large yellow house—the dread of children, with its dark corners and its sombre ghost look. Its garden lies in front, but meagre and untended, with nothing in it to cheer the eye of the passer by. A straggling rose vine here and there tries to clamber above the paling, as if to seek a more liberal air beyond them; but they present nothing to the eye but long lean arms, leafless and bare. There is a wharf built out over a mud flat—for here the river has left, in passing, a skirt of marsh between it and the shore. Regular piles, seemingly of cypress stumps, mark its length and breadth, giving the impression that in former times it had been of some importance. Now, a solitary woman, with her basket on her head, picks her way along on the least muddy side: down she goes, till surrounded by the mud, and her basket disappears, and her head bobs up and down behind the long marsh grass. She picks up oysters, and again we see her returning home to enjoy her supper—the supper of the poor, freely taken up from the storehouse of nature.

Next we see a red house, not very large, but always the abode of refined gentility. It is surrounded by a green, which slopes down on one side to a little branch, passing from a

spring in the next garden, to the river. This little branch gives to the bay the agreeable variety of a rustic bridge, and affords to the village children their favourite sport of running up and down hill; for here the monotony of the green plain is so seldom interrupted that the ups and downs, though ever so small, are highly prized as play grounds, for the races and romping sports of robust childhood. Here are found, on the moist edges of the branch, the earliest shamrock flowers and leaves, always ready for the seventeenth of March. Here also grows undisturbed a little tufted daisy, and here are myriads of little star-like flowers, purely white, that seem to spring like gems from the earth, as we pass over the green; because they bloom on the surface of the grass, and are as small as they are beautiful.

We rise the ascent from the branch and have a full view of the wide green bay, with the village houses on one side, and the blue water on the other. The market house, situated midway up the vista, with its little cupola for a bell, its open sides and its shelving roof, looks like a summer house, seen as it is, in the midst of trees. Here, nearest to us, is a white two-storied house; the steps come down on the green grass, and the long piazza has a hospitable home look that warms the heart even of the stranger. Before it, but removed at some distance from the house, is a row of magnificent "Pride of Indias," that have wonderfully stood the test of many a rude storm.

Beyond this is a wide cross street, the most important in the place, because bringing back to many a mind the loved associations of youth. And what can be so soul-absorbing as the interests of those tender years? What impressions can be so permanent as those made upon the heart's core before the finger of time has hardened it by contact, or sealed it over either with the crust of indifference, or the cold exterior of necessity.

Look at that thoughtful being, whose brow is furrowed by

time, and whose heart is worn down with the anxious care of the mind. This is a moment of rest; rest to the inner being, when all the outer coverings which time has bandaged carefully over the heart's core are unwrapped one by one and laid by; some with a sigh, because they were formed by the exercise of self-will; others with a smile, because they were sent from Providence; none with indifference, so strong and so dear are the habits of our nature.

The core at last is laid bare, and from this spring forth those reminiscences which seem like sweet incense to the human mind. A smile of pleasure illumines the countenance—an expression of repose is imparted to the whole being. Like the flower of some fruit, whose form is still developed in its centre, while the luscious bulb swells far beyond it, so the flowers of early life are found again, and seen in all their freshness and beauty, imprinted as they were, on the pure fresh tablets of the mind.

Here, revelling in the past, is rest for body, mind, and spirit. Here the heart is free from the agitations of life, the mind is folded in retrospect, the spirit once more seems fresh from the hand of God!

The academy, the village church, and the parsonage are on this cross-street. The voice of memory asks, where are those whose busy feet have trodden the green sward? Where are those whose voices have echoed in the boisterous mirth of base-ball and shinny? Where are those who gladly—nay, joyously—trod the path of knowledge in the academy, the path of wisdom in the church, and mingled with warm welcome in the cheerful fireside circle of the pastor's home? The echo to this will not be reverberated from barren rocks, or from desolate homes; but from warm living hearts, throbbing with the impulse of mental and spiritual life. They will answer, from distant points, "Here is the impress. We answer thee, O voiceless Memory, from the heart's core! We remember the scenes of our youth."

Here is next on the bay a large double house, singularly unique in appearance; the gable of the upper story being on the back and front, and rising from the sloping roof of the wide piazza. This upper story is the width of one large room, extending the whole length, with a large balcony in front. The long roof of this upper story extends to the edge of the lower story, on each side, and juts over, affording shelter for a heavy cornice. It has long dormer windows; and hides, beneath its sheltering sides, small rooms for refreshment. These are on each side of the airy and beautiful withdrawing-room of Mr. Elliot.

In front of this, no trees obstruct the view far down the watery bay, and to the "wide, wide sea," which we have already described. Down on the semicircular wharf are the grass-covered cannon-mounds, crowded now in the evening shadows with happy children; some watching the minnows as they swim along the shore, seemingly attracted by the bubbles of the rippling tide; others skimming small white shells far over the blue water; while the largest numbers are playing move-house, from top to top of the green hillocks.

There are other cross-streets; the town pump is on one, and what has been the Masonic Lodge. The stores also cluster around this locality, forming the nucleus of the little place. On another of these cross-streets, lives one revered and loved by all.

Look down the vista from the bay, and you will see an aspen tree, tall and vigorous. Its large green leaves are ever murmuring forth sweet sounds; for, even in the still summer day, there seems a gentle answering to the unseen and unfelt breath of heaven. Even so is its owner. Tall, vigorous, and powerful in form, his soul is sympathy itself; but sympathy guided by a strong mind, controlled by a divine love. His smile is given to the joyous, his tears flow for the sorrowful, the gentle words of his inner nature are ever ready to respond to the touch of suffering humanity. His charities are the result of

self-sacrifice. His hand touches the feverish pulse; and his judicious aid raises the languid eye. Above all, the love of God dwells in him, and breathes around him; and his words of consolation are like pearls set in pure gold, refined in the refiner's fire, and made meet for the kingdom of heaven.

We look beyond the aspen tree, across the green extended towards the big road, and there we see a small yellow house with a red top, with lead-coloured windows and black facings. Incongruous taste! Unlike the aspen tree, whose nature is from God, this symbol is of man's creation, and its history, its destiny, is folded in the life of man.

Here we stand on the bay still. On our right is a large city-like house, with every suitable appliance of comfort and ease. On our left is a smaller house, with its flower garden and summer house, and merry lady-like faces passing to and fro. On each side abides sweet sympathy. From one we see the well-filled baskets of substantials going to the afflicted sufferer; from the other, we see issue forth the form of gentle woman, as she goes abroad to cheer and to relieve. Her innocent jokes and mirthful sallies of wit often lighten the heart and light up the countenances of the sick, while they make the fat sides of the healthy shake with glee.

O woman, why are you so irresistible, coming as you do, holding the nauseous draught! I must take it, and yet I must laugh. Wait a moment. If you will only hold your peace, and I can forget your last speech for an instant, I will take it. There—it is down, thank heaven! without a rebellious impulse. Now, play around me sunbeams as you please, sparkling and bright, striking my brain with a sharp sense of satisfaction, or stealing over all my senses, bathe me in a flood of liquid light. Nay, spare them not, but scatter them around my pillow with a lavish benevolence. There are not many who have found a "trap to catch a sunbeam," but you have been taught by the innate brightness of your own spirit, to shed brightness into the spirit of others.

Anna and Adonis are also walking on the bay, and pass on now towards the old far-branching sentinel, the only relic left to tell the Indian's tale of exile.

It stands in solitary majesty on the turning of the bluff, which slopes beyond it to the river, and around it linger many associations of revolutionary interest. Tents, banners, and military array are blended in the memory of many, with the verdure of its long protecting arms.

Near this there is a beautiful garden, declining under the slope of the bluff, even to the water's edge. It is protected from the high tides, by a bank thrown up around it, on which there is a low fence, and clustering over it, a margin of roses and shrubbery.

Let us stop with Anna and Adonis, and look over the gate into the beautiful enclosure. It is laid off in squares, some of which are bordered with pinks of every shade and kind, from the over-filled and bursting carnation, to the simple grass pink, that lifts its unpretending petals under a border of flowering pomegranates. Here are the white pheasant-eyed, the pink pheasant-eyed, the most perfect specimens of variegated and red of all shades; and more beautiful and more rare than all, the snow-white white that seems a very bride among them. Here are also borders of beautiful sweetwilliams, that seem to reflect every colour of the gorgeous light, and delicate touch-me-nots, looking too frail to be breathed upon, much less to be here, where they often encounter the rude, rushing easterly wind. But there the frosted petals hang, under the faithful little pointed slipper, peeping from the midst of pale green leaves into our admiring eyes. They look as smiling and coquettish as maidenhood at sweet sixteen, but we touch them not, for now they wear the slipper; and when their flowery honours have passed into the calyx life, they spurn the touch of all, presenting first, an emblem of the fresh captivating beauty of maidenhood, and then the repellent age of spinsterhood.

But let us turn again to the sweet and beautiful in nature. All around on the declivity of the bank are plants and shrubs of larger growth. Roses in perfection and profusion bloom around; the white damask and sweet monthly mingled in with the fragrant musk cluster, and the long graceful stems of the florence with its myriads of hundred-leaved bright pink flowers. Here also, towering up in tree-like form, is the "incomparable" or "Mexican rose," that folds within one calyx four large distinct flowers.

Here also comes towards us the presiding spirit of this fairy scene—a sweet, calm dignity rests upon her countenance. Did ever any evil spirit intrude upon that quiet inner life, that seems always to beam forth with love and peace upon all around her? Surely there cannot be, or there would sometimes be seen, the shadow of a troubled thought, showing itself upon that placid brow.

An old lady, with a plain cap and band—for she is one that even fashions make obeisance to—a plain dark silk dress and apron, and her scissors hanging by a silver chain at her side; so clean, so pure, so benevolent, her eyes so full of heartfelt love and kindness. She cuts with her scissors, as she passes up towards the gate where we stand, the most beautiful flowers that meet her eye; and now, what a splendid cluster of sweets she presents to Anna!

She invites them in, and they accept the invitation, for this is something new and unexpected to Adonis. It looks so Holland-like, with its mimic canals; it seems so practical with such results as these before his eyes; he fancies it beyond measure as a most successful experiment; and wonders why all who live on the bay have not the same beautiful, captivating spots.

"We have not the same persevering love of the sweet and beautiful, as our dear friend has," said Anna.

"How do you prove that?" said Adonis.

"Because we are not so industrious in surrounding ourselves

with them. That is the most practical, and the best of proofs; is it not?"

"It proves a want of industry in acquiring, certainly; but I think the tenderness with which you are cherishing that bouquet, proves incontestably that you have an innate love of the sweet and beautiful."

"Most assuredly she has," said the dear old lady; "and I hope, my dear sir, that you will accept this little bunch of white pinks and sweet verbena, which I have selected for you." Then turning again to Anna, she said, with the sweetest smile that ever did throw sunshine over an old face,

"Those who are sweet and beautiful themselves, possess charms enough to attract, without calling in the aid of these little superfluities that, though sweet and beautiful, are short-lived, and soon pass away, even from the memory."

"O! slander not these sweet little angels of nature," said Anna, "that seem to spring to us from the bosom of the earth, filled with thoughts of love and consolation! It seems to me, they whisper that earth is not all desolate—and dreary—and cold;" and, in her enthusiasm, she almost buried her head, with its shining black hair, in the immense bouquet of roses, sweet williams, and pinks.

"You express my own sentiments, my dear young friend," said the old lady, looking at her with admiration, while a tear moistened her mild eyes. "They have been dear little ministering angels to me, I assure you. Nature always seems to beam upon me with her sweetest smiles when I am here; and if you did but know how my heart leaps to see the pleasure of the school girls, when they receive from me an offering from these beds, you would not wonder that I am often selfish enough to rejoice that we have the most luxuriant spot in the village."

"And if you could only witness their appreciation of them, and see how dearly cherished they are when taken home, you would never call them 'little superfluities' again; but think

them little sunbeams that penetrate into the heart, bringing to view the best feelings that linger there—for this is the influence they have on the young and tender mind of childhood.”

“Well, I shall certainly not call them little superfluities again, if they are thus esteemed by those who receive them from me; although I rejoice that my unmeaning charge against the little angels of nature, as you call them, has opened the well-spring of your own eloquent thoughts. We are now better acquainted, and you shall have my choicest offerings.”

While conversing, they walked around the garden. The flowering pomegranates, the altheas, and the popinac, with its fragrant puffs of yellow down, shedding a rich perfume upon the air, formed a bower of interlacing boughs above them, while on their right, and running over the paling, were clustering rose vines, throwing their long, green, luxuriant branches, even upon the dark blue mud beyond.

Adonis had passed up a walk, and was standing near a spring in one of the upper corners of the garden. This was bubbling out under a little shed, which was completely covered with the multiflora vine.

“Why, my dear madam,” said Adonis to them, as they approached, “you concentrate here the means of gratifying all the senses. It is quite a little terrestrial paradise. The murmur of the ocean; the sight and perfume of those beautiful flower—to say nothing of that back ground of sparkling blue water, with this bubbling fountain just at hand, is enough to make one feel like romancing.”

“Well, Adonis,” said Anna, laughing, “if you begin to romance, I shall certainly conclude that you are not in your proper mind. So, as the shadows are lengthening, we will bid our friend adieu.” And they passed out of the garden, ascended the remainder of the green slope, and pursued their walk up the bay.

On their left was the large dark dwelling of the dear old lady; and as they turned the corner of her large upper garden,

they came in view of a pleasant, rural-looking spot; one seemingly excluded by its situation from the rude gaze.

But how pleasant is it in reality, with its beaming happy faces! The clean green grass in front, within that little courtyard, with its low semicircular fence; the little tea-table set with its tiny cups on one side, at which presides the little fairy of the scene—the queen of hearts. The jovial, merry-hearted laugh of the father, the sweetly beaming smile of the mother, are beacons that will serve to light up the memory, and often recall to the mind, things that have existed. They however pass on, with the joyous laugh of the happy child ringing in their ears; and they wish her many joys, and the bliss of a long and useful life.

Beyond this spot is the point, along the margin of which is a walk, embowered with cedars, and extending to its termination. Here, a mimic creek runs at high tide, around a mimic promontory, from which may be seen the graceful moving of the Medway river; and beyond it still, the shores of Bryan county, adorned with settlements of friends; where we know warm hearts are ever ready to welcome the stranger and the friend.

A long wide street, running parallel with the bay, extends in a long vista, from the remains of an old habitation, which occupied the most prominent part of the point.

Here are large trees, planted in rows and squares; and here are the brick foundations of an edifice, that seemed to have been something far beyond the common standard of village houses. Conjecture runs riot with conjecture, and speculation vanishes into empty air; therefore the school children delight in it. They love it also, because here they have quiet, excepting from the echoes of their own merry voices, and an abundance of the clustering cacti, that produces the rich purple pear.

Do you see that ring of happy girls dancing around, while one is imprisoned in the centre? They are enjoying the free-

dom of youth ; and laying up for themselves reminiscences of innocent joys, that will last them through life. Do you see those larger girls, walking under the trees, or seated in pairs upon some fallen limb, or mouldering ruin ? Perhaps with looks or converse they are preparing the store, to which they will return in after years.

They are all weaving in now the bright and golden threads of life, that will give strength and brilliancy to every added hue.

But we must follow Anna and Adonis, who have reached this street. Beyond them, stretching far away in rural beauty, it presents to the eye scattering houses on one side, and extensive gardens on the other.

There is one intervening square open and large. Beyond that, the street again is seen, leading on by the stores, the academy, and the parsonage ; but the eye loses in the distance, and the overhanging trees, the little gate at the other end leading to the old fort.

They linger a few minutes in the crossing, and comment on the view. Adonis seemed, for the first time, to have perceived either beauty or design in the arrangement of the little place. He said,

“ Although this is the last row of houses, this cross-street seems still to be extended on to the woods. How even the grass is ! it looks like a newly-mown meadow.”

“ If you will look again at the woods, Adonis, you will see just within the margin of the forest, the white paling and the high arched gate of the village grave-yard.”

“ O yes ; I see it now. It seems like a very retired and suitable place ; and this wide green pathway really looks imposing.”

“ If we had time to extend our walk back of these houses, you would see another just like it, leading from the direction of the church, and meeting this one at right angles.”

“ Nature has been kind to you here, in casting over every-

thing, this beautiful verdant covering, that makes even the pathway to the tomb seem pleasant and inviting."

"And the spirit of God has done infinitely more, by infusing into this community a spirit of resignation and peace. Indeed, where such holy and unaffected examples have been set before us, how could we do otherwise than cultivate them in our hearts? Have you ever, Adonis, seen a strong man torn asunder by sorrow, and yet remain calm amid the storm?"

"I have felt a strong man torn asunder by sorrow, and distracted by a thousand bitter reflections, and again acquire the calmness of a cold and unrepentant nature."

"Well, let me tell you what I have seen a Christian bear. He had three lovely boys. One of six years old—blooming, active, and vigorous; the pride of outdoor sports, and the joy of the domestic circle. The second was a pale, precocious child, of three years old. We never looked upon that brow, or into those deep blue eyes, without feeling that they were a medium between us and the spirit world. The third was the brightest little sunbeam that ever blessed the eye of mortal. Yet these three were buried in one week beneath the sod."

"My God! is it possible?"

"Yes; and the last and brightest died in his mother's lap. The fiat had gone forth, and she seemed to be presenting it to her Creator, a 'willing sacrifice.' The solemnity of death was there, but not one murmur was heard in the hushed and silent room, when the father's voice rose in earnest prayer to God, that he would enable them to kiss the rod that he laid upon them; and ever make them remember that they were in the hands of a merciful Father. And this is not all. At the funeral, he rose and addressed the congregation, seeking to impress the lesson of mortality, and the fact that God reigned in wisdom, and knew better what was for our good than we did ourselves."

"Such an example never could be lost, certainly," said

Adonis; "and was an instance of great power of will over animal feeling."

"It was the power of pure religion, Adonis; for his heart is one filled to overflowing with the warmest affections; his disposition is social; and, though always commanding respect, he is even gay in his intercourse with the young; thus robbing religion of that sombre, melancholy hue it too often bears to the youthful mind. It seems to me that he has tutored his heart so well by the higher faculties of the mind, that he has it under the most perfect control."

"Well; if his heart has been tutored by the higher faculties of the mind, then resignation is only a mental effort, after all."

"What do you suppose I mean, by the higher faculties of the mind?"

"Why, the power of reasoning, comparing, and drawing conclusions, of course."

"You are mistaken. I meant reverence, conscientiousness, benevolence, and hope."

"But do they not often mislead?"

"Never, when enlightened by the word and by the Spirit; because, when they are, and we obey their teaching, we are enabled to live up to the rule of faith; that is, to do justice, love mercy, and walk humbly before God."

"But how are we to know when they are thus enlightened?"

"'By their fruits ye shall know them.' But to illustrate. Touch a note of a piano, and it gives forth a corresponding sound—either high or low—either clear or coarse—either full tone or undertone—as you desire. Pass your hand against all the chords, and there is a confused and rumbling vibration, exhibiting neither harmony nor design. Imagine, however, the impersonation of harmony, touching the most perfect chords of any instrument, and we know that there would be a corresponding harmony."

"The impersonation of harmony, Anna, as you choose to call it, would make harmonious any notes."

"And so will the spirit of love, breathed from heavenly courts upon the human soul."

"Why, I declare, Anna, you would make an excellent preacher, and your theory is a very beautiful one; but do you really think it necessary that reasoning man should live in a higher atmosphere than reason?"

"I will answer that, by another question. Would you be willing never to step beyond *reason*, in your acts of benevolence, or would you, with your disposition, be willing always to wait and ask before you act, Shall I relieve this sufferer? *Shall I rescue* this unfortunate?"

"No, I acknowledge, that emotion of the soul is almost uncontrollable."

"You are *mistaken*; it is *not* uncontrollable. Its actions are amenable to conscientiousness. Cool reason may extend the hand of charity from motives of policy, but it cannot touch the fountains of the soul from which the 'widow's mite' came forth. But why, Adonis, do you call it an emotion of the soul?"

"Because its sweet influences seem to come from above; and I feel always, when yielding to it, as if the soft hand of my mother rested on my head again as it did in childhood."

"Well, do you not think that this emotion, and this association, would be a good tutor to the heart; and that they alone, would exert a great influence over you under all circumstances? 'Love mercy' would then become inscribed upon its tablets, destroying the influence of those lower faculties of the mind which lead men to anger and strife."

"You have resolved this argument down to your first position, I see, and being determined to make a scholar of the heart, you are disposed to provide the best instruction."

"Certainly; for how can the natural heart, after throbbing from infancy to the impulses of worldly pleasure, dictated by

the sensual desires of the mind, learn otherwise, to love those things that are pure and good? Reason, with its train of under-teachers, are good representatives of worldly policy and natural knowledge; but 'the fear of the Lord, that is wisdom, and to depart from evil is understanding.'"

"Then you think that even reason, that quality that makes us 'as Gods, knowing good and evil,' needs elevation to insure our future happiness."

"*Decidedly.* I must yield to superior instincts and intuitions, before it can be spiritualized and enter into the sublime region of thought, that point from which we can look down upon ourselves and upwards to the Deity."

"And that, I know, is the language of your soul, Anna. No one would look into those eyes, and doubt your sincerity and truth. We must continue these conversations some time or other, and perhaps you may touch the higher chords of my nature; at present, I must acknowledge that my mind is absorbed in the objects of a natural life."

They reached the square, and passing on, they stand for a while beneath the aspen tree. Its fluttering leaves betoken now, as ever, the restless spirit of man! The shadows of evening and the darkness of night may close around it, yet the unquiet and mysterious principle is ever changing—changing. True to its nature while in life, it vibrates to the unseen; but when it receives its portion of life, and has performed its part, it falls and rests quietly upon the earth.

Unsatisfied and restless spirit of man, where is your life, but in responding to the unseen? The Spirit says "Believe," and *to trust is to live!*

Where is true repose, but in attainment? The attainment of that which is beyond the perishable, beyond the life of the fluttering leaf that falls upon the earth from which it sprung, and returns again to the original elements. Where is happiness, but in the consciousness that though "worms destroy this body, yet in my flesh I shall see God?" Not to sink

down, down in the scale of being, surrounded by all that is vile, degrading, and horrible; but to rise, rise infinitely beyond our highest conception, and, with a freed spirit, glory in and glorify the Great First Cause.

"I never in my life," said Adonis, "saw such an air of repose as this place presents to the mind! It gives the impression of a large family at peace with each other. Look at that troop of girls coming down from the point this way! How joyously their happy voices sound, and it seems to mingle in with the harmony of the scene so completely, that my own mind yields insensibly to the pleasant sensations."

"You had better remain here awhile, Adonis, and allow it to soften down that untiring energy of will you have."

"Never, never!" said Adonis; "I must not be untrue to my nature. It would be more inglorious in me now to yield to soft emotions, than it was in Hannibal on the eve of a triumphal invasion."

"Particularly, where reason and benevolence both impel you to action."

"Yes; and I think you very safely may add love to the list, Anna. I leave to-morrow for Savannah, trusting you with all my hopes and expectations; and, as charming as this spot is, with its quiet holy influences, I desire not to see it again until I find the end to this tangled skein."

When they returned home, they found Mrs. Elliot with her bonnet on, sitting by Mr. Elliot in the piazza.

"Where are you going, sister?" was Anna's exclamation on seeing her.

"I am not going anywhere, Anna. I have just come in from Mrs. Rose's; she has been very ill this afternoon, and I must confess, I feel very uneasy about her situation."

"What is the matter with her?"

"God only knows! she seems crushed with some internal trouble. She murmurs 'Helen! Helen!' all the time when not in a state of total unconsciousness. I have seen affliction;

but never saw anything like this before. It seems as if the billows have swept over her, pressing her down beyond the reach of mortal aid. God help her! for there is no human aid that can."

Mrs. Elliot's voice faltered with emotion as she passed into the house, leaving the rest still standing thoughtfully together.

"Poor lady!" said Adonis, as Mrs. Elliot left the piazza. "I do most sincerely pity her."

"Yes, she is indeed to be pitied," said Mr. Elliot. "I have often heard persons wonder at the incongruous match,—yet they always seemed to me to be very much attached. Although she was so gentle and placid, and he so turbulent and harsh, her submission was so entire, and the truthfulness of her character so beautiful, it has always, I imagine, produced a most soothing influence; but alas! I fear it will end in her destruction."

"Death, sir, is preferable to knowledge. If he is what some of us fear,—a man with two wives—the disclosure, in such a case, would be fatal to so tender and gentle a nature as hers."

"Yes, it would be in that case; but my opinion on that subject differs from yours. Judging from the statement you give, I should sooner think it the result of a plot mixed up with the wild excitement of the insurrection, in which so many suffered worse than death—insurrection, separation, poverty and disgrace."

"But some of the circumstances appeared almost self-evident. His appearing in person before her, denouncing her as unworthy and unfaithful, and vowing that to revenge *himself* he tore his infant from her arms—that she should never more behold it, and that the sound of her name should never reach its ear; this, my dear sir, seems like very palpable evidence."

"It does, I confess, in expression, yet circumstances alter the case very much. You must remember the state of that mother's mind. She had been distracted by her husband's seeming neglect of her, and by the idea of his danger in a

desperate war; the death of her father, which left her desolate and alone in the most responsible moment of her life,—in the midst of all this, when wound up to the highest state of mental and nervous excitability, this climax is given to her overwrought nature. How speedy and fatal the result to a weak and delicate organization, the lunatic asylum in Baltimore can testify.”

“But remember, she also described the servant exactly, as bearing away the child in his arms, and it made a most vivid impression on her mind.”

“Yes, I have thought of that; but you remember that there were twin brothers, as Aminta said, servants to each of the Roscos. It may have been one or the other.”

“Well, God grant that you may be correct. You are an older lawyer than I am, and decidedly wiser, I acknowledge.”

“I have had more experience, certainly; and if you think over the evidence, you may find my conclusions reasonable.”

“Gonzalez Rosco is so sensitively acute on this subject, that he would fain close his eyes and go blindfold through the world for fear he might unclosethem on a father dishonoured and disgraced; and this opinion of yours, which I shall give him, will infuse a new impetus into his life. I shall return to Savannah to-morrow, but as I have an engagement after tea this evening, I will ask at once, if Gonzalez will be welcome to your hospitality next week if he should come out?—he in fact told me to make the inquiry.”

“Most certainly; and I will aid him all I can in getting straight the remaining link of this mysterious chain. I will inform Maria with regard to these particulars, when her mind is more quiet with regard to her friend, Mrs. Rose.”

Meals at Mr. Elliot's were always social and cheerful, and this evening was not an exception. Selfish thought was laid aside for mutual gratification while together, and tears of sympathy and sighs of solicitude were reserved, as much as possible, for moments of lonely thought; because, in this

they felt that the heart was indeed solitary ; leaving the busy world, and looking anxiously within for recollections of past moments of sympathy in sorrow or in joy.

Anna devoted the evening in writing a letter to Helen ; a copy of which we would give, only that we know, not very many days afterwards, she answered it with her presence.

CHAPTER XXXIV.

ADONIS JOYCE'S visit to Mr. Rose for the purpose we have mentioned, was of no avail.

"I have told you *already*," he said with vehemence, "that Helen is the child you are in search of ; take her, and tell her that my curse rests upon her *for ever* ! She at any rate will believe me to be her father."

"The time of your triumph, sir, is certainly drawing to a close ; every circumstance points to your defeat. Why, then, embitter *her* life, and burthen *your* soul with added guilt, by cursing her ?"

"Ha—ha—then you too believe I am her father ! That is well ! You do credit to your diplomatic acumen ; and now, sir," he added, with a scowl on his brow, and a curl of derision on his lips, "tell Helen *exactly* what I say—I said I *would* curse her, and I *do* curse her !"

He turned away, and nothing more could be seen of him ; and Adonis returned to Savannah, with nothing more satisfactory on that subject, than the mature conclusions of Mr. Elliot's mind.

On this supposition, which Gonzalez readily caught at, he went directly to the village, determining at all hazards to assure himself either one way or another. We need not say that the Elliots rejoiced in Helen's happiness, although they were

visibly saddened by the crushing influence it had on the life of the gentle Mrs. Rose. She was now too ill to be left at all alone, and Mrs. Elliot was almost her sole attendant.

Gonzalez and Anna therefore enjoyed many moments of delightful intercourse, and these varied feelings of sorrowful anxiety and joyful delight only seemed to invest them with a new interest in each other. Now if you could have looked upon Anna's face, you would have seen the *conscious* blush suffusing neck, and cheek, and brow. Those eyes raised for a moment, brightly beaming, to meet others brighter and more expressive, and then shrinking away under a silken veil, to answer their language in the deep chambers of her soul. Love indeed, sweet, delicious, and absorbing, united them in mind, heart, and soul; and the promise was already given that they would blend their lives in one, as soon as these mysteries were at an end. Gonzalez felt indeed as if he would beard the lion in his den, and demand a solution of all his doubts and anxieties; but he would not now trespass on the peace and quiet of a departing soul, particularly such a good and gentle friend and mother as Mrs. Rose had been to his newly found sister.

Miranda was regularly employed in her studies, which were now of a high order; so that her time was too much occupied to be much with the family. She was also preparing for an examination, for which the scholars, incited to study by the influence of an eminent teacher, were anxiously preparing. The fragments of time were gathered together carefully. The minutes, the quarters, the half-hours were diligently employed. The parsing and grammar, which gave place to nothing, even in the highest classes in this school, were studied until they became a delight. The philosophy, the rhetoric, the use of the globes, occupied them even through the witching hours of evening; for, as we have seen intimated once before in this narrative, it was the custom for the teacher to extend his instructions to starlight; and to allow his scholars, by the use

of his globes, to become thorough in the application of the quadrant, and in the art of discovering constellations, which gave them as much delight, for the time, as it would to a philosopher to discover a new planet.

The favourite seat, at the Old Fort, of Anna and Helen, had also become the favourite of Miranda; and, after school in the afternoon, she resorted there with her most intimate friend, Mary Lawton. There they prepared their most pressing studies, relieving themselves of those night responsibilities which weigh on the minds of the young, when properly impressed with their duties. Then, when this was over, came the romp and the race; the sliding down the grassy embankments; the hide-and-seek—heads dodging in and out among the green plum trees that covered the western side of the fort; and here and there, above the embankment, they would appear, and then disappear again around some angle of the grass-grown bank. In momentary suspension of their own noise, sometimes the shouts of the boys might be heard from "Pole Hall;" but just as if this spot, having expended its prime in the service of man, was now given up almost entirely as a play-ground of the girls.

Miranda and her friend, returning one evening from their sport, saw Gonzalez and Anna walking towards them, down by the little rustic bridge we have already described, where grew the daisies and bloomed the earliest shamrock flowers.

"What a very handsome young gentleman Mr. Gonzalez Rosco is!" said Mary Lawton, as they approached them. "Did artist's pencil or woman's glowing imagination ever paint anything more exquisite than that head, and the graceful elegance of that figure?"

"He is very handsome," said Miranda, smiling; "but take care of your heart, Mary."

"Never fear my heart, my dear; it is too well guarded."

"Ah, but Jack is far away; and he has only left you the

half of a gold ring. I'm almost as well off myself, with none at all!"

"You are mistaken; the half is more precious, knowing that he has the other half." And, thus reminded of it, she drew from some snug place in her dress a small golden medallion, that opened on one side with a spring. There, for one moment, herself and Miranda gazed upon a cluster of hair formed into bows and curling ends, confined in the middle by a tiny band of gold. This was the broken ring, the two ends of which were hidden by the rich brown and black hair that was blended together.

"What are you both contemplating so earnestly, young ladies?" said Gonzalez, as he and Anna came up to them. "Miranda looks as mischievous as usual; and Miss Lawton," taking off his hat, and bowing, "excuse me for prejudging the case, but I think you look sentimental."

"O, I feel decidedly sentimental, I assure you!" said Mary, who liked to carry on a joke very well.

"We can scarcely be allowed the privilege, I suppose, of asking the cause?"

"O, certainly you may! It is perfectly natural, and therefore the cause is innate, having 'grown with my growth, and strengthened with my strength.'"

"And been restrengthened, I expect, by beholding the semblance of some 'form divine' in that medallion. Is it not so?"

"No, I assure you; the 'form divine' only charmed before I looked at the medallion—that dissipated all the visionary spells of outward fascination."

"It must be a very powerful talisman."

"Fortunately; for the occasion required it. Did it not, Miranda?"

"Yes, indeed! I thought her in great danger," said Miranda. "And you were involved in it, too, Aunt Anna, if you did but know it."

"Why, you girls are as mysterious as the locket," said Anna.

"Exactly," said Mary; "and we will keep it in the locket;" and, so saying, she put away the little treasure in its hiding-place.

"Well; but I really do want to know what influence your talisman has?"

"O, a very powerful one. It has the art of blending the real and the ideal—of making the real, beautiful and poetic; the ideal, practicable and useful. In other words, it gives poetry to thought!"

"But how can it accomplish all this?"

"By association and memory—the truest vehicles of pleasure. But farewell; Anna and I must go on our 'winding way.'"

"What a bright, lively girl Miss Lawton is," said Gonzalez, as he and Anna continued their walk.

"Yes; she is a *jewel*," said Anna; "and with no setting but a sister's modest worth, shines ever forth with a pure, sparkling light."

"You excite my curiosity far more now than she did about the medallion."

"Well; I see I must tell you something of her. Her father was a gentleman of excellent family, but entirely destitute of all energy of character. His mismanagement and speed in getting rid of property was remarkable. Disappointment and anxiety of mind destroyed his wife; and not many years after he died, leaving his family not only insolvent, but nearly destitute of common articles of comfort. Well, to the surprise of all, her elder sister, not more than fifteen years old, declared her determination to keep the family together. She did so, under the most disheartening difficulties. By the aid of a most kind friend, who managed the little they had to the best advantage, and by the strictest economy and industry, they were actually kept at school. The elder son is now in the

up-country, teaching a large and flourishing school; and the young gentleman Mary is engaged to be married to, is teaching with him. She is now pursuing the highest branches, and when she marries, expects to join him in his occupation."

"Bravo, bravo! for the American ladies!" said Gonzalez, with enthusiasm; "this is the true secret of your success. As strange as you may think it, my dear Anna, it was that solid *something* in you—I know not what to call it—that enslaved me."

But we will not trespass on forbidden ground; and only because Mary was such a friend of Miranda's, did we linger near to hear what we have mentioned of her.

As soon as Gonzalez had arrived in Savannah, he had written to Isabella of expected success in their pursuit; and in quick response to even a favourable omen, she appeared in Savannah.

This was exactly what was expected and desired. The meeting and the happiness of these sisters cannot be described. Isabella received her sister as a jewel, a gift in trust, that she must treasure and love.

"Oh, my darling! my pet! my precious Estella! (you look surprised, but that is your name) you were named after our darling mother. Ah, how much you will have to bear, my sweet sister!"

"And that from my dear *sister*," said Helen. "How strange, unexpected, and delightful this is to me!"

"Yes! there are strange things—mysterious yet to ourselves—and God grant that no dishonour may tarnish the mystery!"

"Dishonour!"

"Yes! dishonour—disgrace—unless the father who has claimed-you is not your father."

"How so, dear Isa?" said the startled girl.

"Poor thing!" said Isabella, while tears now streamed from her eyes; "your own dear mother is alive."

"*My own dear mother alive!*" shrieked Helen, with an emphasis on every word; and, overcome with agitation, she trembled. "Oh, this must account for his averted looks—his repulsive manner of late. His *conscience* has stung him," she said, as if in reverie.

"Did you love him, Helen? And tell me, was he kind to you?"

"Always, until lately—now, I *remember*—since the visit you made to Mr. Elliot's."

"How did he find out so soon that we were there? You left the village early the next morning."

"I know. The evening I left Mr. Elliot's I could talk of nothing but the strangers. I described you both. He eagerly inquired where you were from, and your names; to which I replied. My father"—but Helen repeated that name feebly—"sprung from his seat as if shot, saying, with vehemence,

"'Did not I say you should never *see them*, never know them, never breathe the same air with them?'"

"I replied, 'You never told *me* so, father. I did not know that you knew them.'"

"He looked wildly, and struck his forehead with the palm of his hand, saying,

"'I told *her* so; I told Estella so, and remember what I say—if you ever see them *again*, my *curse* be upon you.'"

"I need not tell you, my dear sister," continued Helen, leaning her beautiful head upon that shoulder which was ever after to be her refuge and support, "that I went horror-struck and weeping to my room. A tall black servant of my father's"—here Isabella gave a start, but then told her to "go on,"—"a tall black servant of my father's and himself were in consultation most of the night, and the next morning we went off by daylight to the plantation, where we remained until you left the village."

"What is the name of his black servant?"

"Jack."

"Thank God!" said Isabella, clasping her hands fervently. "There were twin brothers, Estella, given by our grandfather, one named John, to our father, and the other called Jack, to a cousin by the name of Francisco Rosco."

"His name is Ferdinand Rose—the same initials exactly."

"His assumed name, I have little doubt; but tell me, sister, what kind of looking man is this Mr. Rose?"

"He is tall, large, and *dark*."

"Does he look as if embrowned by the sun, or as if it was natural?"

"It is undoubtedly natural," said Helen, earnestly; "there is no mistake, darling sister. I remember seeing his arm when some injury had to be dressed, and thinking how strange it was that it should be so dark under the sleeve."

"O Estella, darling, you cannot conceive how this relieves my mind! He cannot be our father: but tell me, did you love him?"

"He was kind to me, sister, until the time I tell you, and I thought I loved him. It seems to me now, that it was more an interest than a love. I always yielded him the obedience and respect of a child willingly, for all my first ideas were confused, and he and Jack the first beings I really remember."

"What was his disposition?"

"Stern and exclusive, but kind; attending to the physical comfort of all around him, he seemed to desire nothing but respect."

"What! did he never show tenderness for *anything*?"

"All I ever saw him exhibit was for his gentle wife—one of the best and dearest of women, but even then it was like one playing with a toy, to be taken up or laid by at pleasure. At one time, before he lost his own children, his chief pleasure was to see the young amused and happy, but even

then he seemed reserved and exclusive. With what a discriminating eye, now, I can look back and see the past!"

Thus the sisters would commune together hour after hour, until Helen, or Estella, knew every circumstance of their family history as well as Isabella did herself, and with it there sprang up in their hearts, with a speed that outstripped the hours, a fair and beautiful temple in which was an altar of sisterly love! Worshipping there together, they ministered with holy hands, unstained by the world; and it was like a "live coal taken from the altar above"—the blissful reality that they were once more united in the same bundle of life.

CHAPTER XXXV.

MR. SEATON had gone to Savannah to bring out Helen, that Mrs. Rose might see her before she died; but this good intention only proved the vanity of human expectations, for the very night after he left the village she breathed her last. The next morning's dawn pierced through closed shutters into that silent and desolate mansion. Her mortal remains were clothed in the vestments of the grave, and there rested upon her countenance the same divine light of love that shed its holy radiance around her path in life.

No children were there to weep an irreparable loss. No servants, as yet, had intruded into the presence of the dead. There was one alone who stood there like a dark and frowning cliff, looking down on a calm and unruffled sea. The harsh features of his face, large and broad and dark, seemed fixed as iron. He stood at the foot of the bed, his arms folded, his coal-black eyes bent upon one spot—the face of his wife. He looked as if he too might have passed from death to life, but

he was still lingering in the dark valley; its cold shadow was falling on his soul.

"And they thought," he exclaimed, "that I *wronged* you! that while married to *another* I had taken you into my bosom! Ah! if I had been"—but stung by some remembrance, he said: "too true, too true! I *have* wronged you! I took you into a serpent's nest; false idea! to warm you into life and being—this has been your destruction! *My* revenge has killed you!"

He walked with rapid strides back and forth across the room, his arms folded and his head bent down upon his chest. The first signs of stirring life below, he passed into his own room and locked the door; and there might be heard most of the day, that dull, measured, and monotonous tread, the evidence of an absent and unquiet mind.

When he comes forth again, he rushes wildly through the house, calling to his boat hands and ordering them to come in all haste.

A storm had risen suddenly, and blowing from the north-west, cast the angry billows on the opposite shore. Sea-birds went sailing and shrieking through the air, the trees bent down, and the house creaked in the furious blast. This was in accordance with the storm within, and for the first time that day aroused by outward association, in sympathy, he arose to contemplate it from his front window.

The first thing that met his eye, was a crowd of excited persons on the landing, looking eagerly across the river; the next was a small canoe-boat blown against the marsh, and nearly foundered in the waves that every moment boiled up more angrily around it.

In one moment the adventurous spirit of his youth returned in full force. Without a hat, and seemingly forgetful of all else, he stood in the stern of the boat, and his long black hair blew around his livid face as he approached the frail and almost sinking bark.

In it were Anna and Gonzalez ; and not until he stood face to face with one who had felt a desperate anxiety to behold him, did he seem to recall to mind his own stern and exclusive nature. Though he had saved them, he frowned upon them with the same fixed expression as that with which he had gazed upon the dead.

He laid his hand upon the rudder, and with one sweep of the waves he turned the boat's head towards the shore, from whence the bravos of the crowd were borne above the raging billows.

In the few moments that intervened, Gonzalez gazed fixedly at him, and as he left the boat he said to him,

"I am *perfectly* satisfied, sir,—you are *not* my father!"

All thanks for safety, and all peril of life seemed to have been forgotten in the deep and heartfelt relief of that moment ; for he said to Anna that evening,

"I have heard it said, dearest, that in the 'midst of life we are in death.' We surely have experienced to-day that in the midst of death we are in life. How bright the future seems now, all gilded with the rosy light of love!"

Momentous hours now passed in rapid succession for a few days, which we might hasten over, or indeed allow them to sink into oblivion, and ourself sitting idly down, listlessly indulge in reveries, allowing them to riot like idle weeds over the fabric of the mind—the work of God.

The next morning's dawn found another corpse ; but it was not clothed in the vestments of the grave. Some mysterious agent had ushered that spirit, in the still hour of night, into the unseen world. There, in that truly desolate mansion, we will leave them both. One with the stamp of an angel, the other with the stamp of time's enemy, the *devil*, on his brow.

It would be so difficult to describe the mingled feeling with which Helen knelt beside the dead, that we will pass over the touching scene ; but the memory of that care which had befriended her, and that love which had been to her the

sweet incense of life, imparted to her countenance the subdued and thoughtful expression of an internal life. In truth, she had experiences now, never even dreamed of before. She began to think that life was a mingled yarn indeed, of bright and sombre tints, with little shadowy vistas passing here and there, through which the mind gazes with mysterious wonder on the future. It was through one of these she gazed intently, as Mr. Elliot handed her—the morning after the double interment—a folded paper. It had been found in Mr. Rose's room, sealed, and directed to Estella Rosco.

As she took it into her own hands, her mind turned instantly to the spirit world, and to that gentle mother, and again she felt as if she was roaming with her, as in her dream in the vessel, over the ruins of the past; and now that she held in her hand the paper, she seemed to hear a gentle voice saying, "Tell me, my child, that you will *trust in God*."

"Yes, gentle mother, I will trust," responded Estella; and in the fulness of a confiding and tender nature, she looked above for support and strength.

Isabella, Gonzalez, and Estella, were all now in the village at Mr. Elliot's.

The folded sheet directed to Estella was the confession of Francisco Rosco (his real name), and deeply concerned them all. It was written on that day when his wife lay a corpse—the last day of his own existence; and, like the tempest that raged within and around him, was forced from his soul by the very elements of discord and unrest that had generated in his own breast, desolating the home and hearth of one beloved. Making a mockery of love, he had blasted its very memory by the fiery wrath of a demon. Thus he wrote:—

"Memory and remorse are stamped on my brain in letters of fire! Wherever I turn, I behold them! When I close my eyes, they sink deeper in, burning! O, memory, *sleep*! O,

remorse, wait for the final *retribution*! It has *already* come!
This is retribution!

"But why cannot I judge my *own* deeds, according to my *own* feelings, my *own* desires? Why does the eye of God assert its scrutinizing power, in the very faculties of my own mind? Why should feeling have to yield to reason? Why should reason have to yield to conscience? Why should conscience have to act in unison with the sublimest sentiments of the soul, to secure happiness? And finally, why should mind have to look out from itself, to secure life?

"Life! once full of hope, full of expectation! Hopes that were bright! expectations that spread before the mind, like the gardens of the blessed! They all passed away, like the fading tints of the western sky at eve, shrouding in gloom the entire heaven. The veil of night fell heavily, and despair haunted the desolate region of the lost and reckless spirit. The wild sea foam, and the rock-bound isle, with the surging billows boiling and roaring around, were the only images that soothed. When in the midst of them, the lashing and foaming of the never-ceasing tumult was fellow-companion to the storm within, that was ever dashing the surges of feeling against the bulwark of the mind! Revenge rushed over the barriers, and swept before it life, love, hope! Wide-spread desolation arose by my will; and for a time I felt the exulting joy of a demon, dancing over the ruins blighted by the breath of fiendish desire!

"Alas! I learned that love was re-creative; and when too late for man to retrieve, felt that there was a sentiment born of a higher feeling than mere animal passion. The little Estella (whom I called Helen) was the angel that first drew into subjection the wild tumult of my soul. I then saw Helen Munro, and loved.

"The balmy spring returned, and the earth was again renewed in its loveliness. The perfume of flowers touched once more the reawakened sense; and my mind, aroused from

its long slumber, bounded with delight at the companionship of lovely and gentle woman! Strange that an angel should have returned that love; but it was you, Estella, or the providence that attended you, that threw around her the charmed links.

"But I must return to the distant past. My father had an estate in Cuba; the situation of which was similar to that of his brother's, on St. Domingo. They had purposely planned them alike, and the details were exactly similar. In 1819, my uncle proposed a purchase from me; saying, that he wished it as a home for his family, in case they removed from St. Domingo. I consented; but treasuring up in my mind the "shadow of coming events," that I gathered in my roving sea life, I wove in with them a plan for my long-cherished revenge.

"The night of the revolt in St. Domingo, I was a *leader*! This will excite your abhorrence, yet it *was even so*! I had fallen *below* humanity!

"I saw her kneeling beside my uncle's corpse; and moved not from my resolve. I rushed by with eager steps, knowing that behind me came tumultuous waves; but I turned my face as I passed, that I might not behold the face of him, who had been to me a father. That cry, 'My husband! my husband!' fell upon my heart like liquid fire; and in one moment the resolve was made, to give the surest stab to that happiness which was denied me for ever. She clung to me; and I threw her off, saying, 'False woman! you have deceived me!' I took up the child from the cradle; and she looked wildly upon me. Yes; there in the home of her youth, with a taper casting its twilight rays through her once bridal chamber, I saw and exulted over the wreck I had created. I held the child before her; and while in its unconsciousness it clung to me, I said,

"'You shall never *again* see this child! *She* shall never bear your *name*! she shall never breathe the same air with you! and your husband you shall never again embrace!'

"She shrieked wildly, and fell lifeless.

"In this state, she and Isabella were hurried from the house and down to a vessel provided for taking them over to the estate already mentioned.

"I felt that the climax of misery was reached; and that she would awake conscious only of one moment of her existence.

"I took Estella and Jack, and found safety among my accomplices; but there were preventives of discovery and security for the past to be considered.

"The titles to the estate, given by me to my uncle a few weeks before the outbreak, were secured. This was to enable me, in case of need, to secure pecuniary power over the family. To beggar them, if necessary to my vengeance.

"A ship coming at this time from England was wrecked, and from it was saved a boy of ten years old. This was Gonzalez. I wrote an account of it to the boy's aunt, saying that every soul had perished, and that as all the family on St. Domingo had been massacred, I felt it my duty to give them intelligence. They wrote back for further particulars, and I gave them—saying that the property was totally lost by confiscation, and every soul destroyed. That I had stood beside the grave, and as my family were extinct, I should myself remove to some distant point.

"I secured this point with more care, because your father had just about this time returned from India. The last thing I heard of him was that he had inherited a title and estate, and was living in retirement on the Continent. I took care, also, that Gonzalez should be informed of the death of his aunt, and that the property had passed to a distant relative. There is one more point I must not forget. My agent in Havana is under the impression that the estate is mine, and may have proceeded according to instructions sent in a moment of passion, to take possession. The titles, which I leave among my papers, will correct that; and to Estella, in the name of Helen my wife, I leave all I own in the world.

"I heard the storm raging without, and I felt an instinctive sympathy. An impulse of youth urged me onward to brave the tempest and the flood, and I found when too late, that it was a part of my destiny—the last link in my chain of life.

"I have saved your brother's life, and do not regret it. Where is the demon of revenge? I wonder not, that in the absorbing interest of that moment, he should have forgotten the raging storm, or that he and his loved one had been saved from the boiling waves. This shall be the finale of the drama. Farewell!"

CHAPTER XXXVI.

A SEASON of repose had followed the exciting scenes we have narrated. Mr. Elliot was absent on official business. Adonis had departed for Savannah, and Gonzalez for Cuba, to arrest any proceedings that may have been commenced against their property, and to establish their claim to the same. This was attended with more difficulty than was anticipated, and nearly three months had passed since their departure.

The sisters remained with Mrs. Elliot during the winter, expecting to go to Baltimore in the early spring. Anna was here also, and was like a sunbeam of joy to the family circle; and Mrs. Elliot was in the midst like a genial ray whose generous light reflected through the clouds and shadows of life. Miranda was in Savannah, receiving instructions in music and drawing.

It was now one of the last cold spells of winter, and they were gathered around a cheerful fire. The porcelain tiles that lined the chimney sides, shone with a thousand reflections of the ever-changing flame, and minarets, domes, and gondolas, seemed bathed in liquid fire. That carpet—our old acquaintance—was still on the sitting-room floor, and though it was

accorded by all to be a most peculiar pattern, it had lost, even with Miranda, the ideal in the useful. The most that could be said of it now was, that it was a "good old thing!"

The letters had arrived, and this was a busy moment. Various were the postmarks—Washington City, Baltimore, Savannah, and Cuba.

Miranda's letter to her mother ran thus:—

"You have always taught me, my dear mother, that self-control, and self-denial, were lessons that could not be learned too early in life. That they were absolutely necessary to give stability to character, and point to effort. The theory possessed wonderful beauty to my youthful mind. I looked upon them as I did upon the polar star; a point to which the eye would ever turn with a certainty of finding the same centre—the same revolving constellations.

"Now, the figure loses none of *its power*; but what will you say, when I tell you that in the practice it has lost a great deal of its beauty. I begin to feel some of the influences from the cold north star. The truth is, I am away from my luminary, and those constellations that delight my gaze and warm my heart when near by. Do *you*, my dear mother, and those charming friends realize, that while away from your delightful circle, I am rivalling you all in self-control and self-denial? I hope you appreciate the 'effort,' and hold me in especial remembrance for the same.

"I am not exactly a 'stranger in a strange land,' here, for I have many kind friends; but Cousin Adonis is quite as distant as a forty-fifth remove, and is as absent as a law-office can make him. When he does come forth, he seems to be chewing the cud of bitter thought. He has a little black-eyed, elfish-looking 'protégé,' that he sometimes takes out to walk with us; and he has a great deal to say to her, for they wander off together, her hand in his, while Uncle Joyce and myself entertain each other. By-the-by, in the last ramble we had, the

jessamine-buds were swelling; and I promised to show him, one of these days, the bowers around my native village. Shall I not see them soon? Tell Ella I shall be qualified to give her some valuable hints on the subject of education, when I return home: and, with love to all, I remain your devoted child,

MIRANDA."

Anna's letter, dated Cuba, seemed laden with some magic charm. It first brought smiles, then blushes; then her little hands were raised, and her face hid by them, still glowing around the edges with the rosiest tint imaginable. Isabella and Estella, who had been reading letters together, now smiled, as they looked at Anna. Isabella passed around to the back of her chair, and, laying her hands over her shoulder, whispered in her ear,

"We comprehend, my sister. Will you not consent? Gonzalez begs me to intercede for him."

"And I, too, my dear Anna," said Estella, kneeling by her side, and embracing her, "must beg for my brother, and for myself. I cannot do *without* you!"

"Isa," said Anna, almost whispering, so low and so earnest were the words, "do you think it will be best?"

"I *know* it will, dearest! I have just read a letter from Baltimore, encouraging us about our dear mother. It recommends a return to old scenes, hoping for a most favourable result. I feel this moment that blessings, like sorrows, never come singly, and that another may sometime await us. Your marriage, now, would unite us in this work of love."

"You have said enough, my dear Isa; and I leave it now to my own darling sister, who has always been to me a mother."

Before Mrs. Elliot could say anything on the subject, Toby came to the door, with a face full of news, saying,

"Missis, massa comin', I b'live, ma'am."

"How do you know?"

"I bin to de pump, ma'am, and I hear a carriage comin', ma'am, soun' jis' like massa own."

"But it could not be, Toby, or he would have been here by now."

"O no, ma'am, I take de cut *tru*, so as to *purpare* you, ma'am. I hear de noise now, ma'am, I *tell* you."

And so they all did; and in another moment Mr. Elliot made his appearance, accompanied by Gonzalez. The excitement of the evening we will not describe. How *can* we? We will only narrate the results.

Before retiring for the night, arrangements were made for the future to some extent. In a fortnight, Anna and Gonzalez were to be married. Adonis and Miranda were to be summoned from Savannah, and another person, whom we least expected—Harry Cleveland. He had accompanied Gonzalez from Havana, having aided him greatly in his business there; but, being charmed with Savannah, concluded to remain there for a while. It was also arranged, that, after the wedding, the Roscos should go to Baltimore, and take advantage of the mild weather to remove their mother to Cuba.

"And now, Estella, darling," said Isabella, "I have no idea you shall lose any more of your roses, by sitting up longer to see this wild brother's happiness; let us say good-night!"

"I have been selfish, indeed!" said Gonzalez, as he walked with them to their room-door. "Estella does look pale. Why is it, my sister? Does the recollection of the past weigh so heavily as to make the present sad?"

"O no, my dear brother, do not think so. The past is with God, and the present is as precious to my spirit as the dew is to the flowers. It is true, I have a sorrow; but it is the result of my own rashness, and I must bear the penalty alone."

But she did not bear it alone; for that night, with her head pillowed on her sister's shoulder, she imparted it to a sympathetic heart.

CHAPTER XXXVII.

THE marriage was now over, bringing in its train numerous festivities from various quarters. The village was gay with promenaders in the afternoon, strolling in pairs or in groups to some one or other of our favourite haunts. In the mornings, riding parties of pleasure were formed to some of the neighbouring residences.

Palmyra, a delightful country residence, was three miles from the village. All the young loved to go there, because cheerful mirth and enjoyment were the order of the day. The long piazza extended more than a hundred feet in front, besides there was an elbow that passed around each end, while the different rooms opening upon it afforded a fine opportunity for grouping together in pleasant coteries. These all enjoyed, by turn, the pleasant countenance of the kind and hospitable host, who was never so much in his element as when in the midst of a pleasant crowd of visitors. There was indeed no limit to the hospitality of host and hostess, and none it seemed to the India rubber qualities of the house, that stretched to receive all that came. So it was with no common pleasure that the bridal party heard that there was to be a large dining and tea party at Palmyra.

Smiles lit up faces, and joy sparkled in many an eye. They imagined themselves already promending with their favourites up and down the long piazza, or out on the grassy lawn, under the shade of the cedar trees, or perhaps seated on the brink of the river bank, in the shade of the summer-house, contemplating the prospect; the blue water running beneath their feet, against the steep bank, and turning gracefully to the right, laving with its rippling tide a more sloping bluff, on which another settlement, smiling through trees, called

"Springfield," was situated; or if their eyes turned skyward towards the beautiful sunset, they would inevitably see those white cranes, like long lines of smoke floating in the air, settling at last upon a hammock, in the marsh, being metamorphosed, as they lit, to white flowers in the distance. These were, however, only to be the outward associations of the expected happy day. There were electric wires to be put in operation, conveying thoughts, feelings, and much untold, and untellable, nonsense!

It was rather strange, then, that the day of this party Estella Rosco should have remained at home, a lone tenant of the library. She was occupied in writing, but if it was a diary she was filling up, she could only have made a hasty sketch, for she soon left the table, and selected a book. This she opened, but after turning a few leaves laid it on the table and reclined her head upon its open pages.

There she remained motionless, seeming to enjoy the solitude that surrounded her. Her hands, clasped beneath her beautiful brow, were as white as the dress in which she was robed, and that brow which her auburn hair partially veiled, rivalled the snowdrop in its soft purity of tint. Ringlets fell around her graceful figure, even below her waist, but as they were divided by her bending form, a simple black velvet band displayed itself around her neck, above which it could be seen as white and smooth as polished marble. Estella Rosco had lost none of the beauty of Helen Rose, but she *was pale*. It seemed as if some hidden grief was at her heart, for the warm impulsive life of the past was fading away, and leaving in its stead the quiet life of reason.

After a while there was a measured tread passing backwards and forwards the whole length of the long withdrawing-room above stairs.

"Who *can* that be?" said Estella, looking up,—and there were tear-drops resting beneath each beautiful eyelid. "Who

can that be?" she repeated; "I did not know there was a soul in the house."

Still the sound continued, and still she sat thinking in a dreamy way. It approached the door, as if to leave the room, and she instantly jumped up, saying: "I must go in my own room—he may be coming in here."

It seems strange, but they met at the door—Adonis Joyce and Estella Rosco. He made no apology, but taking one of her hands passed her arm within his, and walked back to the staircase, saying,

"Have I your permission to show you a splendid view from the front window of the drawing-room?"

"I was just going to my room; but—"

"I beg that you will *not* refuse me," he said earnestly.

"I will not refuse, but—"

"Alas for me! *but* may I not *urge* you?"

"My poor *but*," said Estella, actually laughing, "was very innocent, I assure you. I was going to add—but do you not know that I am well acquainted with every feature of that scene?"

"Yes, but one can never tire of it, and I wish to recall an association with which you are unacquainted."

By this time they were in the room. The front window was wide open. It was a calm day in early spring; the sea breeze was rippling the blue water, and even to the very ocean's verge there was only a gently moving surface; the heavens looked bright and glad; the marsh was putting forth its young green shoots, and the "Table of Pines" opposite seemed murmuring forth sweet music to the whispering wind. They stood arm in arm gazing out upon this world of life and beauty, and it seemed as if the glad notes of nature were awakening some echoes in their own hearts.

"What is it you admire most in this scene?" said Estella, feeling that there should be some interruption to thought.

"That little line of *white shells*, far down on the edge of the sound."

"What?"

"Perhaps *you* may not see it. Let me get the spy-glass. Now look; do you not see a bank of white shells, on the *west* side of the sound?"

"O yes, I see it. It is called the '*White Shells*;' and is a famous fishing ground: but I cannot *conceive* why it should excite *admiration*."

"From association entirely. I saw there what I most admire in the world."

"You speak in enigmas. Was it a drum-fish, or a whiting?"

"*Neither of those*," said Adonis, so earnestly gazing at her, that Estella's eyes sought the floor.

"May I speak without enigmas?"

"O, yes, *to be sure*!" said Estella; but she leaned rather heavily against the side of the window, which opened into the balcony. The breeze wafted her long ringlets over her bust; and as she turned her face towards Adonis, it looked paler and more lovely than ever.

He stood with his face towards the sea, and his eyes fixed upon the "*White Shells*," as if he was linked for ever to that one association of the past.

"Well, I had been the cause of unexpected sorrow, to one who had excited my *deepest* interest. She was sent away from home, without companion or guide; hopeless, and distressed. I had seen this with anguish; and determined, if possible, to shed one ray of comfort in that desolate heart.

"The vessel anchored for the night, down at the '*White Shells*;' and while all were asleep, I went in a canoe to the stern of the vessel. Excuse me when I say, that the vision my eyes beheld then, was imprinted on my heart in lines of beauty, that no time can erase. She slept; and I left a note in the folds of her dress, breathing a prayer that she might awake trusting and hopeful.

"Will you forgive me for all the past?"

"*Forgive what?* Have you not been the means of surrounding me with *love*?" said Estella, her face now beaming with light. "I have *nothing* to forgive, but a great deal to thank you for."

"Estella," said Adonis, taking one of her hands and pressing it between his own, "will you spurn me now, for loving *myself*?"

"No," was breathed rather than said.

"Will you *love me yourself*, dear girl?" he continued, drawing her gently to his side.

"I will, *for ever*!" said Estella.

"And will you promise," said Adonis—for the first time taking a cluster of her soft silky ringlets in his hand, and putting them back over her shoulder, while he gazed upon her face—"will you *promise*, dear Estella, my *own love*, to send *back* the roses to those cheeks, the love-light to those eyes, from that heart where you have been keeping them all to yourself?"

"I will," said Estella, with an arch look, "particularly as I know now positively, by two most incontestable proofs, that you are not to marry Anna."

"Is it possible that you believed that absurd report?"

"*Certainly* I did. I teased Anna about her *beau*—meaning *you of course*—and she looked so conscious, that I believed it positively."

"Why, Anna has been engaged three years to Gonzalez, conditionally. Until their first visit here, they had only met in Washington City and Savannah. Thus is the mystery unravelled."

And thus the hours flew by; and they missed not, so much as they were missed, the gay crowd at Palmyra. The glad light of nature and of love beamed with full radiance upon their hearts, while they promenaded from the back to the front, from the river view to the towering orange trees, loaded

with young buds, just beginning to show their white leaves. They gave already a touching evidence of the perfume that was soon to fill the air; and in their sweet language they continually said, "We are made for the bridal!"

CHAPTER XXXVIII.

A FEW days on the sea-board, where the earth never becomes thoroughly chilled in the winter, suffices to bring out all the accompaniments of spring—the balmy atmosphere, the fragrant odours of flowers, and the green and verdant covering of nature. The jessamine bowers were in perfection. Surely green leaves and sweet yellow flowers never contrasted more beautifully!

The margin of woods on the edge of the village common, extending from the "Big road" on one side, to the "Island road" on the other, was festooned with these generous adornings of nature. Not only on the tangled brush-wood did they clime and twine, but, throwing their long and fibrous vines over trees of large growth, they bent them down, forming fragrant bowers; while far overhead they glided unseen along some eccentric limb, and hung in long waving sprays of sweetness, suspended in mid-air and floating wildly on every passing breeze.

Although the sun was at least two hours high, the green-sward was in shadow; only occasionally, long rays would glance down between the moving limbs and vines, melting away in its path over the green. Beyond this level green were the houses of the village, still dressed in sunshine; and again beyond these, and more to the right, was seen the ever-important "bay," with its blue, moving mass of waters. "Oak Forest" road crossed the woods not far off. The entrance to it

was marked by a dilapidated house, quickly passing into ruins, and two or three hundred yards back of it, and in the edge of the forest, was the negro burying-ground. This was marked by no paling, but the greensward covered each grave, and the jessamine vines formed fantastic groups and mimic bowers in the trees far overhead. Here it was that the sunlight penetrated, for it was more open; and the negroes had placed rude benches here and there for use, when they came to linger at the graves of their friends.

On one of these sat Harry Cleveland and Miranda—our little Miranda, now displaying the full bursting buds of womanhood. There was the same smooth, calm, thoughtful brow, the deep blue, feeling eye, the almost Grecian regularity of nose, mouth, cheek, and chin, the radiant complexion. All these were combined with perfect simplicity of dress. Not one thought seemed to linger in laces, or to lose itself among bows of ribbon, or to seek reflection in any sparkling jewel. A simple white cambric dress, with long sleeves and high neck, a black silk apron full of jessamines, and a blue scarf tied around her neck, formed the “*tout ensemble*,” and fully justified the truth of the old adage, that “*beauty when unadorned is adorned the most*.”

Harry was handsomer far than when, standing on the beef-block in the market place, he rang that merry peal that called Miranda to her first school-day. His eyes rested on her now, as if he thought her yet a “*fairy*.”

Rich, soft curls, still shaded his smooth brow, but they were now a dark chestnut colour. His eyes were almost black, and his moustache and imperial were also much darker than his hair. His features were regular and beautiful—too much so for a man, we would say—but his heart was warm, and his head was sound; and what was far more important to us, Miranda had found that out!

“Not old enough to *love*, Miranda?”

“To *love*! yes,” said Miranda earnestly, as she picked to

pieces a beautiful wreath of jessamine; "but not old enough to be *engaged*, dear Harry."

"Do not say so; and above all, *do not think so*. Look at that house," he continued with animation, pointing to their old residence; "does it not actually seem to groan with the weight of years, crumbling like its former tenant into the earth? And this has all happened since we were children!"

"It has not as bright a home-look as it used to have when you lived there," said Miranda; "and it does seem a long, long time, since we played here as children."

"Yes," said Harry, "as happy and as free from care as the birds that nestle above our heads; and will you now, Miranda, my first and only love, send me away without one firm and ever-abiding link to bring me back? Here I would return," he continued in a softened voice, "and find a sharer in life's joys and sorrows. You have given me your heart—promise me this hand, and I will go away happy, and resigned to wait."

Miranda laid her hand upon his arm, and looking at him earnestly said,

"Harry, of my heart you may be ever certain; but a solemn promise *to be yours*, without my *parents'* judgment and consent, is what I could not *think* of. To be untrue to them, would be guarantying untruth to you."

"*You are right*, my dear Miranda; I feel that you are right, and I willingly consent to be guided by them."

"If so, then we are safe, dear Harry; but," she added, with an earnest inquiry, "you will not always live at Havana, will you?"

"O no; in two years I shall be admitted a junior partner in our business, and then I shall either go to New Orleans or New York, which ever *you* prefer."

"O, dear me, Harry, do not talk so!"

"Why not?"

"Because it seems so *very strange*!"

"It does not seem strange to me, at all, that you are to be the lamp to shine upon my path through life. Ever since that day at the Retreat, when we had that squirrel hunt together, I have *loved but you*."

"O, Harry!"

"It's *the truth*, Miranda; and I will tell you another thing. Though I was a young and giddy boy, I saw in the clearness of your judgment, and the prompt decision of your mind, that there was something here"—and he laid his hand lightly upon her radiant brow—"worth striving for, as well as worth loving."

"You have all the talking and all the praising to yourself, Harry. You did not know that I thought you, from that time, the handsomest and the kindest boy in school?"

"No, I did not, or it might have cheered me in my lonely exile."

"Lonely exile, indeed! were you not in the busiest bustling world of America?"

"Ah, but without a heart—because, as I tell you, mine was in your keeping from the time that you said, 'Here, Harry, put him on the tree, if he dies, it shall be in his own forest.'"

Any one, to see this happy young pair, or to hear their tones of free and confiding love, would have doubted the saying, that "the course of true love never did run smooth." What was there to interrupt the even tenor of their way? What to break in with discordant jarring, upon the sweet harmony of their young lives? Even Miranda began to think, by the time they had walked up and down the "Oak Forest" road; scarcely making a foot-print with their gentle tread on the grass-covered track, that the present was all joyous and glad, and that the future would—must—should take its colouring from the rainbow tints that spanned them in a bow of hope. And the two years of Havana residence dwindled down in Harry's mind to a mere circumstance, a speck to brush away from the glorious future. Yes, they walked side

by side, really one in sympathy ; but alas ! how far separated, it was well for them they could not see !

CHAPTER XXXIX.

COUSIN TEDDY had moved away from the village, and gone to live near a "well-to-do" relative of Rowlan's ; for she had actually succeeded, she and her five children, in harnessing the poor young man regularly into their service. The excitement of her own love affairs had made her forget, for a while, those of her neighbours ; and the desire to appropriate all the benefits of her new connexion, while yet it *was a new thing*, had confined her thoughts to the circle of her own home. Yet we must acknowledge (having taken a peep into it ourself) that it possessed the commonest attractions. Children and pigs were drawn together there ; and we would judge that nothing of a higher order could find even a comfortable footing between the four walls of her dominion. "Higgledy-piggledy," was the ever-prevailing order ; and the highest exercise of benevolence and politeness were called into requisition, as soon as an entrance there became necessary.

A new order, however, had arisen in the village cottage, since Cousin Teddy had moved away.

The boards of the floor, which before were never visible for the dirt, looked up brightly upon the visiter. The plain oak chairs and tables had not a mark upon them, of even a soiled finger ; and Cousin Gracey, who was now mistress of the house, was as clean and bright as a new pin.

She still wore curls in the evenings, and on Sabbath days ; and they streamed down as long and ungracefully as ever. But what of that ? beauty to her was an idea, connected only with Jordan's approval ; and of that she was secure.

Jordan was a regular fisherman in drum season ; and had just brought home his return for the day. *Ten* drum, and most of them with roes. The roes weighed nearly two pounds apiece, and were already engaged to the richer neighbours—and some parts also of the fish.

Jordan's mother came limping across the common to get her share ; and to let Gracey know that she would be there the next day, to help with the scouring and washing. And in the midst of it all, "Old Aunty" and "Cousin Teddy" drove up on a visit. The gray mare had now turned out to be the better horse ; and while Rowlan stayed at home with the children, she had come down to enjoy the sea-breeze and the fish.

"Why, Jordan, you've had luck to-day !" said Teddy, coming to the bench, on which he was scaling and preparing his fish for market.

"Yes, we had a pretty good run to-day ; but we had to go all the way down to 'White Shells.' This old fellow I am at now, gave me a long chase, I can tell you. He run out my whole line, and played for one hour before I could bring him to."

"Well, we do miss the fish badly up in the country, I can tell you. We gits nothin' but the *dam* fish ; and I just as leave eat mud."

"But you get something better than fish, I suppose, Cousin Teddy ? Don't the old woman there help you along mightly ?"

"All stuff, I can tell you. We're no better than niggers on the plantation ; though Rowley does git a little pay, that's all we've got by goin' there ; and the truth is, Jordan, you and Gracey will have to git out here by the eend of the year."

"Why, you soon got tired of your new condition that you thought so fine. Ain't Rowley satisfied ?"

"Ah, that's a different thing ! We are the biggest half that has to be fed. If Rowley was here we could git as much fish in the summer, and oysters in the winter, as we wanted—and nobody needn't want nothin' better."

"You come to see Gracey and me, or the fish, Cousin Teddy?" said Jordan, as he hung the half of a cleaned drum on a nail in the tree.

"Gracey and you, *to be sure*. I come to ma's last night, and she said she'd ride this fur with me; and she telled me how you and Gracey was gittin' on mighty well."

"And so you thought you'd break us up, on the strength of it?" said Jordan, smiling; "that's just like the old serpent in the garden of Eden, that Mr. Seaton reads about in the Bible."

"You're very perlite. There's many a thing said in joke that's meant in arnest, I have heard; an' maybe that's one of 'em; but ef I am like the serpent, you are like the wolf, that takes all your lambs from one flock."

"Lambs are lambs, Cousin Teddy; and if I ever went to your flock, it was done in broad daylight."

"Much good they'll do you. They was well sheared when you took 'um; and you'll be well sheared when you've done with 'um."

"You had better walk in the house, Cousin Teddy, and see Gracey," said Jordan, quietly; and as she turned away, with a toss of her head, and walked in, he added, "it's a clear thing, that *you* ain't a lamb!"

When she went in the house, "Old Aunty" and Cousin Gracey were busy talking about some little work that lay in and around a basket; and among them was a nice little wrapper, just done, made out of the skirt of an old dress.

"Well, I declare, Gracey," said old Aunty, taking out her snuff-box, and inhaling a pinch of maccaboy; "I declare, you're a right good hand to git along. Why, gal, you ought to have been married a long time ago. Here, Teddy, you'd better take a lesson from Gracey; for you're always needin', and never larnin'."

"Pshaw, ma!" said Teddy; "Gracey's been larnin' a long time; and besides, she aint got any childun yet, to distract

her. She's got things mighty clean about here, I see," looking around; "but wait; she'll be sited different, one of these days—you'll see."

"Nothing could make me like dirt, Cousin Teddy," responded Gracey, with warmth; "even when I lived with *you*, I always had *my* corner clean."

"You audacious, good-for-nothing, poor-school charity child!" said Teddy, very red in the face; "you dare to talk to me, who give you a home so long, in that imperdent manner? Hoity-toity! I won't stay here another minit. An' I tell you another thing; you shan't stay here any longer than I kin git Rowley from that place up yonder."

"You're a fool, Teddy," said old Aunty; "you know you always was a filthy woman, and a lazy one to boot; and that Gracey was o' great sarvice to you always."

"'Twould be a bad thing for us to fall out now, Cousin Teddy," said Gracey, "when we know each other so well. I know you don't mean half you say; and you know I learnt things in the orphan asylum, I never could learn from you."

Cousin Teddy gave a grunt of disgust or dissatisfaction; and Gracey continued, in the same tone,

"I am going to get supper now; so take off your things, and put them in the shed-room."

And she soon brought in wood to replenish the fire, and fresh water to fill the kettle. The corn grist was next sifted from the flour, washed, and put in the pot to boil. The flour then was washed for bread; and, after the combination of eggs, milk, salt, and a teaspoonful of butter, it was consigned quietly to a little oven, in the corner of the capacious chimney. It received a few pats, as if to give it a feeling of security and repose; and then it was covered over with its iron lid, regularly "tucked in," to make it digestible.

Now Jordan's tribute was brought in—three-eighths long and two-eighths wide, of clean, white drum-fish. Salted, peppered, and floured with a sprinkling of corn meal, it was

laid in the frying-pan, to friz in the fat, till one side was thoroughly done. Now the water was poured in the kettle, and soon the evening song commenced—first it murmured ; then it bubbled ; then it came pouring from the spout, and through the little round hole in the top of the kettle, as if the tiniest spirit of steam was rejoicing in its past and coming triumphs. It was too soon for the crickets to join in, for the shadows of the woods, though long, were not yet obscured ; and the western sky still glowed with a bright, though fading light.

Old Aunty and Cousin Teddy talked on, at first with their heads together, and their hands busy in Gracey's work-basket. The work was all on tiny garments, and made mostly of half-worn materials. Cousin Teddy's nose expressed some scorn, until the strong perfume of the frying fish brought it down again to strict animal enjoyment. Pity it was, that Gracey's ear caught these words, as she was passing by,—

"She never will git over it, poor thing! Sence she had them fits, you know, she never has been nat'ral like. A nice gal ; but she won't be here long."

Poor Gracey ! what a doom was hers ! With good instincts, no encouragement to action, no opportunity to rise. Now she had found a nest—one that a poor birdling, one as gentle as herself, had fallen from—and thus rudely she was to be pushed out of it, into the depth, the limitless beyond. Her hair was very black ; her skin was very yellow ; her eyes may have looked pretty once, when she was a bright and happy baby ; but now, though they were very black, the whites were very yellow, and the lids were swollen and puffy above and around them. Yet, with all this, her features were regular, and there was a softened, sad expression that invested its plainness with a charm.

"This is a pretty little cap," said Cousin Teddy, taking it up from the basket, and holding it on her hand ; "an' it's made o' the finest kind o' lace too, I declare. You'd better ha'

saved some o' your money, and bought some new calico dresses, I think."

"I didn't spend any money for it, at all, Cousin Teddy," said Gracey; "that was a present from Mrs. Rosco, before she went away."

"Mrs. Rosco! who's that?"

"Why, Miss Anna Young. Didn't you know that she was married, and gone away?"

"Why no; I heerd, before I went away, she was gwine to be; but I didn't b'lieve it. She always seemed so settled like, and particular, I thought sure she'd be a old maid."

"O, no such thing, I can tell you! She is well mated," said old Aunty, "with as handsome a man as ever you can see. Such eyes! my soul! they look down into you like sunshine. They rode out on horseback to my place; and, while I was diggin' potatoes in the patch, they was at the fence, talking and laughin', as gay as two grasshoppers of a summer mornin'. When I comed up, she leaned clean down and put in my hand one of the beautifulest snuff-boxes you ever seed, and said I must keep it to remember Anna. Ah, she was as sweet and proper a gal as I ever seed in my life!"

"And Helen Rose was *another*, Aunty," said Gracey.

"Yes, she was a good one, too; but who ever did hear o' sich doin's as them Roses cut up here, turnin' the whole place upside down, to set themselves straight!"

"For the love of money—how was it?" chimed in Cousin Teddy, between the juicy mouthfuls of luscious fish. "Was it true the man run away with his own child?"

"No, that wasn't true," said old Aunty; "she wasn't his child, at all, and I *always* said so. He run away with her from a great *conflagration*, where they all liked to been biled and fried."

And they all laughed at Aunty's smart speech, for it was so apropos to the hominy and fish they were enjoying with so ich zest.

"Well, how in the name o' sense did they ever find it out?"

"Mr. Joyce, who they say is a great lawyer, tracked it out for um; an' they say now he's goin' to marry her."

"Well," said Cousin Teddy, wiping her mouth after a hearty meal, of which she gave aldermanic evidence, "strange things have happened here sence I went away. Mr. Rose's house shut up—he and his wife dead—and Miss Helen turned out to be somebody else."

"Yes," said Gracey, "and Mr. Elliot's family gone to the North to stay a year."

Now the conversation flagged, until it stopped entirely; and, by the time Gracey had washed up and put away her things, old Aunty and Cousin Teddy were both fast asleep. The cricket was singing on the hearth; and the frogs in the woods, with their song of "tea-table, fry-bacon," seemed to be mocking the supperless, and preaching contentment to the full.



CHAPTER XL.

TWELVE months had passed away, and Miranda Elliot was seated again on the rude bench in the edge of the village forest. The jessamine vines clustered above and around her, and from their gay and fragrant flowers were scattering sweets on the evening air. The grass-covered graves were before her, brief vestiges of the past, and lasting records of the future, treasured up in the broad bosom of the earth. The green common, spreading out in quiet perspective, shone with long rays of golden light streaming through the tops of the forest trees and the waving vines.

Miranda's mind had gone on with more than a footpace towards womanhood. Womanhood, with its intuitive tendencies to abstraction in feeling, and to a concentration of the

warmest impulses of the heart! "Hope deferred" had left visible lines upon her young brow; for here it was that she had looked forward with fond anticipations of meeting Harry Cleveland. Two months before, she had received a letter from him to that effect; but he had neither made his appearance nor written since. "Where can he be? what could have happened?" she had asked herself many times. She had passed through all the restlessness and excitement of hoping and of "hope deferred;" and now the misery of despair seemed almost resting upon her mind.

The school-girls, who were playing among the vines, came around her, filling her black silk apron with flowers. This reminded her of last year; and she sighed, and looked off far away to the blue waters of the bay, that danced on the horizon.

"Here, sister, you must wear this golden necklace home for me," said Ella; and she threw over her head a string of the flowers, two yards long, strung on a cord.

"Here, Miss Miranda, you *must* let me weave this rich cluster of flowers and half-blown buds in among your golden curls. Just look, Ella, how sweetly they set off each other!" said another little girl.

Still Miranda was thoughtful and sad; and a tear stole into her deep blue eyes, and almost touched the delicate fringe of her eyelids.

But why this deep dejection? Why this failing of hope in one so young, and so filled with buoyant life? Is it natural that *our* Miranda, the thoughtful child, the reasoning girl, should now fail to be the trusting woman? Or has she good cause to feel a sinking about the heart, that impelling organ of physical life, that either throbs with the excitement of hope, or shrinks under the influence of despair? We will narrate facts, and leave the reader to judge.

There had been a rumour for some months of a Cuban expedition, and from the first, Miranda's face wore a sad and

thoughtful expression whenever it was mentioned. She asked her father one day, in the most earnest manner,

“Do you think, my dear father, that this is really so?”

“I fear it is, my child.”

“Then, will not the Americans who are on the island be in danger?”

“Their safety would certainly be doubtful.”

Since then she had asked no questions, but anxiety was making sad lines on her face. Her eyelids looked heavy in the mornings, as if they had covered sleepless eyes; her cheeks and lips were pale, and her light golden curls cast shadows on her smooth and shining brow, which was often contracted, as if with the pain of inward thought; her form was becoming fragile and sylph-like, as if the mortal part was leaving the ethereal nature to bear alone the suffering of the mind.

Mr. and Mrs. Elliot had hurried to their secluded home in the village, where there was but one mail a week, and very little of that, thinking that all rumours could more readily be kept away from Miranda; yet here it seemed the mesh of her young life was to receive its darkest threads: they were thrown in carelessly and woven in firmly—so firmly that death stood side by side with time struggling for a victim. Long they battled, and fearfully they fought, and friends stood by looking on powerless in all strength but that of mental prayer and trust in God.

Mr. Seaton's creed was the Bible one, of “weeping with those who weep, and rejoicing with those who rejoice;” and there he was with his friends, ever ready to sympathize with and comfort.

Still the struggle went on fearfully, until at last the murmuring of hope was heard in the gentle voice, that returned once more from its wanderings, to her happy childhood; her mind resting continually on the joyous scenes of the past. There was a smile, too, and an innocent confiding look as of one trusting

and hopeful; yet of one untrammelled by much thought. Still the struggle was not ended, and tearful eyes peeping through bed curtains watched hers that were ever watchful and sleepless, for she slept not, and she lived in an unnatural and ideal world. But at last the struggle ended.

Time was the conqueror, and Miranda was again borne bravely over the waters of life. The warmth of humanity was diffused through her veins, and the moisture of returning life and health stood upon her brow and cheek. She slept, and her gently undulating bosom, and the regular throbbing of her pulse, indicated that it would prove "nature's sweet restorer." Time looked smiling and glad, and hope returned to the breasts of the watchers.

Miranda was sufficiently recovered to be supported by pillows on the couch in her favourite room. Her mind, though still anxious with regard to Harry's safety, was assured by her parents that he was still in life, and she obeyed them by speaking as little on the subject as possible. Sometimes she laid her hand on her mother's, and looked pleadingly in her face as if she wished her to divine her thoughts, and answer them; and her mother would say in reply,

"By and by, my daughter, you will know all and be satisfied; a little while longer, try and be trusting, hopeful, and quiet."

Mr. Seaton, with his cheerful smile and judicious care, was ever aiding them in administering to her mental satisfaction. Her mind, with its innate tendency to inquiry, returned under his influence to the highest objects of interest; those connected with the most elevated faculties of the mind. When he was with her he expatiated on any subject that her own mind suggested; and thus, without much exertion on her part, he gave her thoughts which led her onward and upward.

"How is it, Mr. Seaton, that the heart should not only fail, but the body sink so entirely under the influence of disappointment?"

"It is because earth is blended so intimately with our expectations, and hope, which should be influenced by the most elevated feelings, is so gratifying to us in its influence upon the heart."

"I thought that hope itself was an elevated feeling."

"It is both elevated and elevating; but, uninfluenced by feelings that are superior to it, it fails to sustain under the most trying scenes of life. Did you never hear that 'hope leaves us at the portals of Heaven?' It then becomes fruition in the presence of the Eternal Source, *through faith, lost in love!*"

"Hope lost in love!" thought Miranda. "What an analogy between earthly and eternal things! My earthly hope was lost in earthly love, and I was left a wreck!" Her mental monitor responded promptly, "Where was faith?" and Miranda yielded with a sigh to the monitor at her side.

"Hope, my young friend, is that emotion of the mind which unites the moral and the animal faculties, just as the heart is the link between the physical being and the faculties that govern physical life. Thus, you see how necessary hope is to the perfection of even animal enjoyment. It is then *elevating*. What heart does not remember moments of bounding joy, bestowed by hope of sensual enjoyment? The bright sunshine—the fragrant flowers—the delights of earthly love?"

Miranda laid her hand upon Mr. Seaton's arm, and said,

"Tell me of an *elevated* hope. I know *that*, alas, *too well!*"

"An *elevated* hope, then, is that which looks *upward*, and is influenced by those moral and ennobling sentiments which are the links that bind man to Heaven—the worship of God; the love to our fellow-men, and that conscientiousness which, with the point of a diamond, writes justice in the soul of man. Hope then becomes an 'anchor of the soul, both sure and steadfast.' It looks onward to fruition, not backward to the perishable things of earth."

Thus it was that this kind friend gave Miranda subjects of

delightful and instructive thought, until she lay like a weaned child, calm and passive in the hands of God.

CHAPTER XLI.

THE way that Miranda's system, which was already overwrought, had received the shock we have mentioned, was, that in returning from her walk one evening, she called in at Cousin Teddy's—for she had removed back to the village—to inquire how her sick child was. Her eldest son had just returned home from the country, and was talking of the news in the piazza adjoining the room.

"I reckon," said Rowlan, "you was very glad you didn't go with them folks, after all."

"That I was," he replied, "for I never should have come back again—that's sure. They say not one of them fellows is left alive."

"How did you hear it?"

"From the Savannah papers. The steamer had just come in and told of it, and said that all the Americans was taken up, and that Harry Cleveland is among them."

Just then a figure flitted by them on the piazza, and running hastily across the green turned the academy corner and disappeared. Not until then did the men take their eyes from her, or continue their conversation.

"Who was that, Teddy?" said Rowlan.

"Miss Miranda Elliot," said Teddy.

"What do you reckon was the matter with her?" said Rowlan.

"O nothin'," said Teddy; "only Itell'd her the doctor said the child was so weak it must take some quinine, and we hadn't none, an' she said she would go and git it."

"Did you reckon she heard anything we was sayin', Teddy?"

"For sartin—just as plain as if you was in here, man; but what o' that?"

"I'll bet you she never heard anything but Harry Cleveland's name, for they was always mighty fond o' each other—so Gracey used to say; for, poor thing! she used to keep a mighty look out upon the sweethearts."

"Let poor Gracey rest in her grave, Rowlan?"

"Yes, I will, wife—for, they didn't use to let her rest much when she was out of it. But what else did you hear about Harry Cleveland, Jackson?"

"He was at the same village when these men were taken prisoners—Las Pozas, I think was the name. He told them he was on the way to see some of his country friends, but they wouldn't believe him; they said he was an American spy, and should die with the rest of them."

"And do you reckon that was all they heerd about the poor fellow?"

"That was all; and they say it is very hard to hear anything; they keep such a close watch."

"An' I reckon that aint true, may-be."

Here a servant girl came in from Mr. Elliot's; and with all the eagerness of curious minds, they inquired "how all were?"

"All well; but Miss Miranda *jis* faint 'way."

"How was it?" said Cousin Teddy, coming out to the door, the picture of disorder.

"Well, when *he* gone home, ma'am, *he* walk right up to de physio box, and take dis physio out. Missus come in den and ask, 'what you gittin', Miranda?' he say 'some quinine for de baby;' but he neber look *one way* nor *de udder*, only at me, and put um in my han, dis so."

"Well, but when did she faint?"

"Missus ask um den, 'How is de baby, Miranda?' and

Miss Miranda say, 'It is gone to *Cuba*, mamma, and is *dead*, *dead*!' an' she fall *right down*."

"I reckon as how I was right in my calculations, you see, Teddy," said Rowlan, "an' now, if you can get us some supper, we will be glad, for I has been ploughin' mighty hard through that Bermuda grass."

"An' I reckon if you wants supper, you'll have to come and git it yourself. Madgy is cryin' now for me, and the pig is grunting mightily in the corner with that broke leg, an' there's no water in the pail, an' there's no fire in the chimbley; so now just move your own stumps, you an' Jackson, an' git supper yourselves."

"Well," said Rowlan, rising up with good humour, "the gray mare is yourn now, Teddy, an' that's sartain."

Will you peep in upon the supper? It may give a useful lesson. At any rate, it will display before your mind one feature in humanity—that which brings it down, grovelling! Idleness, waste of time, frittering away the fragments of that precious material, born of heavenly wisdom, yet fleeting! United with the breath of life, yet hanging by the brittle thread of a moment! Woman, arouse thee; let thy proper duties attract thee from the stupid inertia, the dreadful slavery of idleness!

But no! It will not do. Habit has become second nature. Uncombed hair, untidy costume, unwashed skin—red, black, dingy, smutty, filthy—and there was the pig, grunting and squealing in the corner, and the child, grunting and squealing too, as if in sympathy, held out its little arms.

Rowlan was himself decidedly the bright spot of the scene. He was true to his destiny. He worked hard all day to support his family, therefore had a conscience void of offence towards them. He did all he could do to bring order out of confusion; but alas! the accumulations had gone on from day to day. The handles of the cups, the mouths of the pitchers, the edges of the plates, all testified; and the floor, which once

smiled, had now resumed its old mask ; covered up beneath dirt was the original grain of the beautiful pine wood.

The kettle alone, sung its same merry song, for that was independent, a subject to the laws of steam alone, that compelled it to sing or burst. And it sung blithely ; and Madgy, the sick babe, laid her head quietly on the big, red, bare arm that held her. She listened to the kettle, while with her eyes she followed her father's figure as he went about, from the three-legged slab, with the fourth corner hitched up on one of the braces of the unceiled room, to the table that stood on the floor, from the chimney to the piazza, and so on.

At last the supper was complete. Like a good being, Rowlan had stepped aside from his sphere, for the sake of peace. As independent as the little steam-engine on the fire, he was acting in accordance with a hidden law of his nature, affection.

"Go now, and eat your supper, Teddy, an' I will hold Madgy," and the child jumped eagerly into the arms of her father, and laid her burning cheek upon his shoulder. She murmured in a gentle voice, as she laid her little hand on his cheek, "Pappy, dood, dood pappy," and fell asleep.

Teddy eat, until satiety took the place of hunger, and nodding ensued. Rowlan still walked noiselessly with the sick baby, his own little Madgy.

There was no busy hand washing up, yet the cricket's merry housewife song was ringing sharp and shrill, just as if the hearth was clean and the floor was swept. The frogs were singing in the woods "tea-table, fry-bacon," with an occasional bass thrown in from the ponds of "blood'n'ounds," while all through the quiet night was heard the monotonous, plaintive note of the "whip-poor-will, whip-will-willow."

CHAPTER XLII.

WITH the consent and approbation of her parents, Miranda had been engaged to Harry Cleveland for more than a year; that is, from the time he had come to attend Gonzalez's and Anna's wedding. Miranda, with her truthful and confiding nature, hesitated not to tell them of her love, when she knew that it was returned. Their first reply to the application was, that she was rather young; that her education was not yet completed; and that the engagement had better be conditional.

"Conditional!" said Harry; "what condition, my dear sir?"

"That you *continue to love!*"

"I will guaranty myself, sir," said Harry; and taking Miranda's hand, said, earnestly, "Miranda, what do *you* say?"

She laid her hands confidingly in his, and bowing before her parents, said,

"Papa and mamma, we love. Do not be afraid to trust us."

Mr. and Mrs. Elliot laid their hands upon them, and blessed them; but they did not realize the depth of that pure fountain that had sprung up in the heart of their child. As they watched her with tenderest love through her illness, so they looked with the same anxiety upon every passing change in her convalescence. In this state, they welcomed Mr. Seaton's aid in entertaining her; and, at the same time, leading on her mind in the legitimate channel of instructive thought.

They had, for some time, no news to cheer her spirits, for what they had heard of Harry was of the most unfavourable character. First, they heard that he was shot among those men first taken prisoners; and this they feared was true, because, in the hot zeal of the government, the Cubans were disposed to view all Americans as enemies; and his having

been at the very spot where these men were taken, seemed a preconcerted thing. They dwelt with sad expectation upon the weary, weary hours their broken-hearted child would be doomed to bear, before the reaction of the heart. The stream would have to be diverted from a deep hidden track. It must be brought to the light once more; sparkle in the sunshine of the world's glare; partake again of the joyous impulses of youth, before it could bear upon its bosom another image.

At last they heard that prisoners were sent to Spain, and that it was likely that Harry was among them; but it was some time before they received any information they could venture to give as positive. Even this, Mrs. Elliot knew must, in Miranda's weak state, be given with great care.

In the mean time Mr. Elliot had made arrangements, in connexion with this news and Miranda's illness; and this was, to go for a few months to Europe.

When Mrs. Elliot thought Miranda well enough, she sought her, with letters in her hands, and found her in the long withdrawing-room up stairs, just on the verge of "Paradise," that summer-inviting spot just over the front piazza. The earthly paradise that lay at her feet, however, seemed to have no portion of her thoughts, for her eyes were fixed far away, apparently upon that waving, unquiet line of blue water, that was ever dancing against the sky. Her hands were almost unconsciously employed in forming a mesh of white zephyr; and it hung down like a snow-drift, from her pale, tapering fingers. This seemed to be merely *accidental*. Her curls were golden still; but the gold was the relieving tint, sprinkled over to set off the rich auburn brown beneath. They looked soft and damp, as if the natural heat of that fair young body was passing out with the strength of it; stealing a march upon time, while yet the glory of that young life was radiant and beautiful.

Mr. Elliot found her not alone. Mom Elsy was there, with her provident and womanly care. She had brought pillows

from the room; and, turning down a chair behind Miranda, was urging her to recline back upon it.

"Ki, my chile! wot is de matter wid you? You lub for look at de water so. Wot is it you see dere?"

"It separates me from something that I love, my dear momour," said Miranda, laying her hand over the old lady's shoulder. "Don't you feel sorry for your darling?"

"Dat I does, my chile. Every grief your heart feel, my heart feel it too. But, my darling, you must look to God—our Fader in Heaben—Him help you, true!"

"Yes; and our Father in Heaven always does right; does not He? Can you always feel that, momour!"

"Always, my dear chile; eber sence dat day when my heart did trust in de mercy of God. I feel here," laying her hand on her heart, "dat He will do eberyting right."

"Do you always trust in Him?"

"*Always trust in Him!*" echoed the little black woman, clasping her hands together and raising her eyes to Heaven, as she knelt by her young mistress's side.

Miranda looked sweetly upon the little old lady, who had been to her a foster mother since her infancy, and thus they were when Mrs. Elliot entered the room.

"Here is a letter from your friend Mrs. Hinton, Miranda. Are you well enough to read it yourself, or shall I read it to you?"

"Come and sit right down here, by me, if you please, my dear mother, and while I lean my lazy bones upon you, I will listen. I am anxious to hear how Mary is getting on in her new home."

The letter ran thus:—

"Imagine me, my dear Miranda, in the midst of an up-country settlement—everything very new, not to say, *green*. At any rate we have everything very green *around* us. Our laily experience brings ever to mind the two last lines of that

memorable quotation, 'just as the twig is bent, the tree's inclined.' We enjoy the figure and contend with the reality at the same time, for our school-house is in the midst of the green woods, and the children come from different quarters, pouring in like little tributary streams, each day. They interest me already with their ardent and impulsive natures; their 'rough and ready' kindnesses, that overpower one with surprise—that excite smiles of approbation, whether in or out of place.

"I have already asked myself a hundred times (more or less), 'does refinement and polish consist in robbing nature of these intuitive impulses that echo approval in the heart if not in the intellect?'

"Alas! for a moment I had lost sight of my vocation. It is to teach the intellect how to shoot—*too long a bow*, perhaps; to aspire, to lift itself above mannerism, and above feeling; and to fix itself firmly in a world of thought. Well! there are many little blue-eyed, bushy-headed young ones here who will look bravely out upon the world, and shake their locks in triumph when they come to the contentions of life.

"By and bye they must lack barbers in this region. If you could only look into our school-room you would suppose we were raising a crop of mattresses. But soon we will hear the hoarse voice of the black dragon, for the schoolmaster is not the only civilizer abroad in our country. Progress, progress, progress! is pealing its loud anthem, and even these pine trees, that are hiding the blue heavens from us, are reverberating the sound.

"Jack is a famous teacher, I assure you—as good as he is practical, as much respected as beloved, and 'vice versa.'

"Send me some of your rose-coloured tints, my dear Miranda, to brighten up the green rays that surround us here; these soften and mellow our life; they are like the sunset rays, that even now are casting long shadows down the sandy road that passes in front of our academy. The rosy dawn will appear

to-morrow, but the night must intervene. May every dawn prove to you an omen of good, and every night bring soft slumbers and pleasant dreams to your pillow, is the prayer of ever your sincere friend,
MARY."

"Dear, sweet Mary! how cheerfully she writes," said Miranda. "But where am I to get those rose-coloured tints from, to send her, mamma? Mary could not have known of my sickness, surely?"

"O no! I suppose not. She lives in such an isolated place that this letter is several weeks old. But here is another letter."

"Another?"

"Yes; one from Anna, who writes to relieve your mind about Harry."

"Thank God!" said Miranda, drawing a deep inspiration.

"Where is Harry, mamma, tell me?"

"He is gone where we are going—to Spain."

"And are we going to Spain?"

"Yes, in search of Harry!" said Mrs. Elliot, smiling; and bending down over Miranda, in whose eyes grateful tears stood ready to flow—"Who ever did hear of a young lady going after her lover before, excepting in romance?" continued Mrs. Elliot. "Ah! Miranda, answer me!" and she played with her curls and kissed her delicate cheek.

"Papa is *too* good, *too* kind, *too* considerate of his little Miranda. Now just for *my* sake you have done this?"

"Yes; our pet lamb is wounded, and we wish to go where we can get a soothing balm to heal those wounds. It is not without precedent, Miranda, that one wandering or wounded lamb should excite more interest than a whole flock. But do you not wish to hear your aunt's letter?"

"I am waiting anxiously, mamma."

"DEAR SISTER:—Dispossess your mind of all fears with

regard to Harry Cleveland; his case was very gloomy at first—indeed, he was on the eve of execution, which I fear you have heard. His release arose from a discovery among his papers of a note from Ex-governor Concha—Isabella's husband—inviting him to the estate to attend the wedding of Helen and Adonis. They immediately remanded him to prison, and through Concha's influence they have consented to send him to Spain. His liberty is certain. The government here will not release an American in Cuba for fear of censure at home.

"I am not certain that you will get this letter, but as there is a chance of sending it, I will write longer. Helen and Adonis were married about three months ago, and their honeymoon has shown a full-orbed lustre.

"Mr. Allan Joyce, who came on with his son for his health, enjoys this climate very much. He has become a benefactor to us as a family, in a most extraordinary degree. Our mother, who you know has been for so many years deranged, insists upon calling him father. She seats him in her father's arm chair, combs his gray hair, rubs his brow to soothe him to his afternoon's siesta, kneels before him, and asks his blessing when she retires for the night. Indeed, it has thrown into her mind a new light—she seems to be living over the days of her youth once more.

"Every day he walks with her to old Aminta's cottage, and sits with her under the bamboo on the bank of the little stream. He talks to her of her mother, as he remembered her in the days of his youth, the 'belle of Baltimore.' Aminta looks on like a sibyl. She says that the hour of restoration will come—that she reads it in the heavens. What a strange old woman she is! But Mr. Joyce is truly a good angel. To one of the kindest natures he now adds the daily example of unaffected piety.

'We all live together, united in one work of love, for

which I know we have your good wishes. I can write no more now. With love to all, I am as ever your

“True, true ANNA.”

CHAPTER XLIII.

IN two months Mr. Elliot's family took their departure for Europe, and from the influence of hope in the heart, Miranda was regaining rapidly the life and animation of health.

We will not linger with them on Atlantic waves, watching the clouds above, or the passing wonders of the deep beneath; but accompanying them through the straits of Gibraltar, and to the port of Malaga, enter immediately into the interesting object of the voyage.

Here they waited to have some certain tidings of Harry Cleveland. The Cuban prisoners had been landed at Ceuta, a town in Morocco, a penal colony of Spain; but on inquiry, they were informed that Harry had been withdrawn from the rest soon after landing, and carried they knew not where. Whether they could not or would not say, was to Mr. Elliot a matter of doubt; and in the breasts of all it renewed the uncertainty of suspense.

They travelled through the south of Spain to Madrid. In the heart of Miranda there was gathering by the way, strength and firmness to meet the storms of life, and to brave for him whom she loved more than her weak woman's heart had ever dreamed that she could bear. And with that gathering firmness came a gathering hope, that, as she journeyed on, surrounded by the remains of Moorish art and Moorish luxury, shone above them all, a fixed beacon light to guide her. Nay, a holy ardour seemed to sustain her, as if she was going a pilgrimage to some holy shrine, at which she hoped to receive some heavenly gift.

And this she was receiving day by day, at the shrine of her own heart, which she had dedicated to the "living and true God." He was strengthening and purifying it by the dews of heaven, the graces of love and faith.

A procession moved on towards the most magnificent cathedral of Madrid. A dense crowd filled the streets, and the pageant that attracted every eye, passed in beneath the sculptured arch.

Within the recess of this door, there stood a noble-looking gentleman, and leaning on his arm, a delicate figure enveloped in a black silk mantilla. This was our Miranda, leaning on the arm of her father. She had nerved herself bravely for this undertaking; but though they had come at an early hour to get this prominent station, she stood now leaning against the embrasure of the door, as if her strength was almost gone.

"Miranda, you must not overtask your strength, my daughter; and if your courage fails you, we can perhaps find some other way of saving Harry."

"O no, my dear father; I am only leaning here to gain a little strength of body. My heart is strong, and my trust is in God."

Music pealed through the cathedral, and the lofty arches reverberated the rich full notes as they rose and fell; and the Queen of Spain, surrounded by her royal attendants, and beaming with the majesty of her own royal presence, approached the door.

Miranda gazed out from her black silk envelope, her blue eyes beaming with entreaty and anxious hope: but never, until an officer came forward to thrust them rudely aside, did she seem to fear disappointment. Then she sprang forward, and her mantilla falling to her waist, disclosed, at the very feet of majesty, one of the loveliest daughters of America.

The Queen of Spain had a heart already laid wide open to mercy. She had already touched the secret spring, from

which many a wounded heart was to receive "the oil of joy for mourning."

She looked with kindness then upon the kneeling American, and received from the hand of her secretary the petition that was offered.

"Here is mentioned the name of our good and faithful servant Concha. Let us to the audience chamber. We have also business to transact with him."

And they hurried on—Miranda almost unconscious, excepting that she had parted with her talisman, and had received no surety of its success. She was carried beneath the shadow of overhanging jalousies; and heard the murmuring of fountains falling upon marble floors. She heard the rustling of silks passing to and fro; and saw above her, in the recess of a window, one looking down upon her with interest.

This was a Spanish lady, with a fair and noble brow. Her hair lay in folds around it. Above this was a high comb of the finest workmanship; over which was thrown a black lace mantilla, that fell in folds around her form. In another moment Miranda was folded in her arms. She was Donna Isabella—the wife of ex-governor Concha.

"Let your mind be at rest, my darling," said Isabella; "Harry is safe."

"Thank God!"

"Yes, he is safe," said Concha, coming in; "but I have had to pay a heavy ransom for him. If it had not been for the fair Miranda," taking both her little hands in his, "who, I remember, was always in Washington City a good friend of mine, I believe I should have left him to gain some experience in the mines of Spain."

"O, you deceitful man! You would have done no such thing," said Isabella. "But what have you had to pay?"

"My own liberty."

"What? Impossible!"

"It is possible, I assure you; for our gracious sovereign

would consent to his full liberty on no other terms, than that I resume the government of Cuba."

"Thus showing her reliance on the faithfulness of her good servant Concha; and considering that this event has only precipitated the reappointment, you need not grumble at your destiny. Allow me to be the first to salute my husband as governor, to whom I now owe gratitude, as well as love."

"That reminds me, Isabella, that we have but commenced our labour of love. You must soothe and comfort this little one, while I go and regather all the stray flock, and bring them here. Tell her that there may be one or two additions to it. Be sure and tell her *now*, dearest, or it may be too great a shock."

But Miranda was regathering her strength. Her head was buried in the silken cushion of an ottoman—not from languor, or fainting, or a weak heart; but she was returning thanks for this great blessing of her life.

"And shall I really see Harry to-day, Donna Isabella?" said Miranda, with animation.

"Yes, you shall really see him to-day. But before he comes, I want to tell you a remarkable adventure of his, on his way here from the port of Malaga. Do you wish to hear it?"

"O, yes; I am anxious to hear anything about him and his adventures."

"Well," said Donna Isabella, smiling, "he *fell in love*—"

"O, impossible!"

"With an old gentleman whom he met in the streets of Granada." Miranda now smiled, herself. "This gentleman was attended by a tall black servant, whom Harry thought he knew perfectly well. Mind you, Harry was under escort for this place, through some unknown influence, as a kind of honourable prisoner; but, notwithstanding this, he was determined to effect his purpose. So, managing to brush violently against the black man, he said,

" 'Hallo, Jack! how came you here?'

" 'My name is *not* Jack,' said the black man; drawing himself up with a great deal of dignity. Harry laughed at his coolness, and said,

" 'Well, you must be his twin brother, then!'

" 'I had a twin brother by that name, sir. My name is John, and I am a servant of Lord Greville.'

" 'Ha—ha—ha—I believe, old fellow, I left you in America, when I came from there?' said Harry.

" 'I never *was* in America, sir,' responded the offended black man.

" By this time you may be sure the police had him in custody; and soon the master followed to inquire into the affair. The latter part of the conversation was only a ruse of Harry's to get an interview with the gentleman; for, as soon as he heard the names, he felt certain that they were somehow or other connected with our family. The result of it was, that Harry has found our father for us, Miranda, and that to him he has opened a new life, unlocking the floodgates of feeling, once more, that he thought by one single stroke had been closed against every earthly hope. My father had received every assurance, through that base man, Francisco Rosco, of the destruction of everything, both of property and life; and, just then inheriting the title and estates of Lord Greville, he came to Spain, to spend the remnant of his life in Granada, 'the world forgetting, by the world forgot.' "

" And I am willing to have suffered all I have," said Miranda, " that Harry should have the satisfaction of being the finder of such a precious treasure, for such precious friends. But did they come together here? "

" Yes; and in these arms I again held my *own dear father*! How can we refuse, my darling, to believe in the providential care of God, who out of evil brings forth good for those who trust in him? "

" Yes, I think I have myself proved, that all things work

together for good to those who love God. But is your father in Madrid now, Donna Isabella?"

"Yes, but he is just on the eve of starting for Cuba, where Gonzalez and Helen are anxiously awaiting him; most anxious, you may be sure, for his arrival, yet dreading its announcement to our mother. Now that this reappointment is made, I hope we may go on together."

What a reunion there was in the capital of Spain, that evening! Harry and Miranda had an alcove all to themselves, where they talked over all the trials of the past, all the hopes of the future.

Lord Greville and Mr. Elliot were a pair well matched in intelligence and the varied experiences of life. Mrs. Elliot and Donna Isabella lived over the scenes of the past; while Ella and Senator John (as Mr. Gonzalez used to call him) were enjoying themselves in the marble hall below, amid rare flowers, the singing of strange and beautiful birds, and the mimic moonlight afforded by the soft rays of solar lamps, reflected from every glittering spray that fell from the marble fountain.

Late in the evening, Concha came in, having been the whole evening engaged in receiving official instructions. His orders, he said, were positive to sail within a week.

"Not soon enough *for me*, sir," said Lord Greville.

"Well, possibly we may get off sooner," said Concha. "But where are those young people?" All eyes turned towards the alcove, that was screened from the room by a curtain, and looked out upon the garden. "They are very silent, if here they must breathe their ideas," he continued, drawing the curtain aside. "They are not here, certainly. The birds have flown."

"Well, they must have made themselves invisible, if they went this way," said Donna Isabella. "We have not seen them since the first of the evening."

"Let us go and search for them in the garden below," said Lord Greville. "I'll wager my epaulettes that they went

down by the window. These young Americans are *wonderfully* trained."

Mr. Elliot laughed heartily at the remark, and said,

"This is only a remote influence of our independent republicanism."

"It is a remoteness, with a vengeance against all settled governments, sir; a remoteness that tends continually to the centre; for these wonderfully trained young people, with such an impetus of action and of thought, become after a while the bulwarks of your country. I wish you could have seen the way that your son-in-law elect twisted these Spanish policemen around his thumb, making them believe he meant one thing, when he meant another."

They came by this time in view of the fountain; and there were Harry and Miranda, Ella and John Elliot standing around. The glittering spray rose far above them, and falling in fine particles at their feet, ran rippling out into the garden, through shrubs and flowers of the rarest kinds, and bending lilies.

They were evidently very much engaged; and our party came quite to them, over the marble pavement, without their being aware of their approach.

"Hallo, Jack! how came you here?" said Lord Greville, slapping Harry on his shoulder.

"My name is *not* Jack, sir," said Harry, drawing himself up with dignity.

"Ha, ha, ha! good! very good!" said Lord Greville. "If I were not in the capital of Spain, I would cry, 'Hurra for the Americanos!' But how did you get here?"

"By escalade, perhaps."

"Here it is again, sir," replied Lord Greville, turning with animation to Mr. Elliot; "who, but an American young gentleman, would ask his lady-love to scale a wall with him, unless he meant to run away with her?"

Miranda laughed heartily; and blushing, said,

"I must inform your lordship, I see, in self-defence, that there is a flight of steps into the garden, from Donna Isabella's alcove."

"Ah, indeed! that is a full explanation. I see you are not such a scapegrace as this young gentleman."

"Not a scapegrace, your lordship; but a *grace receiver*!"

"True, true. I acknowledge that, from your fair hands. Well; I must beat a retreat, or my patriotism will burst. Come, Concha; let us sail for Cuba."

"Not quite yet, my lord. At any rate, not until I have delivered my sovereign's commands. Now lend an attentive ear. She commands, in the first place, that Harry Cleveland, formerly resident of Havana, and taken at Las Pozas, among the first prisoners of the Cuban expedition, shall no more approach the port of Havana, with the intention of remaining there, for the space of at least ten years. This is the *personal* condition of his *full pardon*. In the next place, she desires, with the approbation of the family and the parties concerned, that the marriage of the said Harry Cleveland and Miranda Elliot, shall be performed within the week at the royal cathedral."

The shades of evening had settled gloomily and sadly over the dwelling-house of the Roscos, on the island of Cuba. Wandering to and fro were restless forms. The drooping verandah was lit by a single lamp; and beyond, nought but the starlight shone upon the broad leaves of the catawba, the feathery foliage of the acacia, and the bamboo thicket by the edge of the little stream.

Gonzalez and Anna were there alone, standing near the railing, and watching first within and then without.

In the wide hall was laid a corpse—just such a scene as we have before portrayed. The shroud and the winding-sheet, the burning lights and the kneeling figure.

Mrs. Rosco (now Lady Greville) was absorbed in uncon-

sciousness; for, though very nearly restored to reason, she still insisted that Mr. Allan Joyce was her father.

The disease which he had contracted in a colder climate, had now terminated his existence; and here he lay, another tribute to the grave.

Adonis and Estella Joyce were there, and though in deep grief, they seemed absorbed with the living as well as the dead. No creature was seen there beside these and the watchers; and no sound was heard, but the rippling of the little brook, and the buzzing of the fire-fly, as it gleamed through the silent air.

"Gonzalez, do you see Aminta's light burning in the bamboo hut? That is the signal. They are come."

"Come, did you say? And yet I dare not run to bid him welcome! O, my father!"

"Your mother's life and reason, dear, depends upon your self-control now. Be calm, my-husband." And she enticed him on, to steal further away into the dark verandah; and when they turned again to watch the dead, two forms were kneeling there: one, a noble-looking English officer, on whose broad chest the head of the gentle and suffering Estella was leaning and smiling.

"And are you come at last, my husband?"

"Yes, at last. Where are the children, dear wife?"

Then old Aminta—who was there—gathered them together, and kneeling around their parents they laid within her arms a fair young babe.

"This is little Estella; the infant of your eldest-born, Gonzalez."

Who can enter into the deep recesses of refined hearts, and lay them rudely out before the world? Let us draw the veil then, and leave the lost child, the lost father, and the distracted wife, all restored to each other and to the world.

Let the dead repose among the hearts that adopted him, and

his children's children live to revere his memory, who was justified through faith, and sanctified by the spirit of love.

CHAPTER XLIV.

ONWARD rushes the puffing, grunting, groaning, shrieking, horror-sounding steam-car, through the interior—the very heart of Georgia! It has laid low many an old monarch of the soil, and with ruthless hand spared not. Progress was marked upon them, and to progress they have fallen! Here the reverberating pines have toppled over in obeisance to its power, and there the girdled trunks stand bare. Red and green houses—white, blue and yellow, mark its spotted, sprinkled, driving course. Hills have opened their bosoms, and valleys have risen to their level, for this monarch of the world—of time; this creature of man's thought; this emblem of the unseen might of everlasting motion!

We clamber down into the cleft bowels of a juvenile mountain. The sides are not rugged, like the work from nature's hand, who lays her boulders, and her granite, and her particles of sand here and there and everywhere, covering them over with verdure and with vines, to please the untrained eyes of nature's children. Here we see some straggling briars, with white flowers, promising of bitter fruit; and there, the May-weed clinging rankly to some hard red lump of clay. Tenacious things of life! that cling to this hill-side formed by man, and every day tremble in the whizzing air of his dread machine.

The innocent irons lie below—two narrow lines of black, passing across ribs of oak, but we feel an involuntary shudder when we hear the shrieking, groaning, grunting, puff-puffing of that dragon of death. We imagine we can see it urging on

its course above the valleys, and beneath the hills, and through our own warm heart.

But we cling to the briers ! Tenacious of life, we greet thee ! Let thy fruit be sweet, and the red soil of this smooth hill-side ever afford nourishment for thy useful existence ! We feel the pressure of the hot air upon our lungs. We inhale the smoke, the cinders. We feel the gentle trembling of the friendly plant. Hold on ! hold on, we pray ! Now we see a goodly company of faces, for one moment looking out and looking up, at the great parasite, living upon the life of a plant.

Now the air is free once more—the plant is free—we are free ; and the irons look innocently up, inviting to a slide !

There, we *are* free, for risen up, and shaken from the red dust, we are wending our way back, to the grand dépôt of railroads !

“ We met—’twas in a crowd,” hurrying to and fro. “ Baggage”—“supper”—“rooms.” “ Macon train leaves at eight, sir.” “ This way, sir—this way, sir,” was heard in every direction—mixed up, jammed together, falling over one another, cracking, splitting, tearing both the air and the ear. Impetus reigns supreme ! Inertia is lost ! The beginning and the end of time unremembered till it touches us with its cold finger, and points to death ! We hasten to No. 4, where our twin-life breathes and flourishes—Mary and her child.

As the Macon train puffs, and groans, and grunts, and rushes on its winding course, romances and loves and pleasant memories linger in No. 4. The arms of old and well-tried friends are opened with a welcoming embrace ; and the brightest and the most enduring tints are weaving quickly in the passing threads of time.

These are our old village friends ! Our backs are turned upon that quiet spot, but our hearts remember it as of old—our minds dwell upon it—our memories treasure it—yes, intellect loves it, and imagination depicts it, embellished with all

the glories and the blessings of its past existence—its holy calm—its lovely union—its repose.

We talk about it as it is—in ruins—not one stone left upon another of that German architecture, where Miranda lived and loved.

Perchance, the solitary woman takes still her lonely walk along the edges of the marsh—the oyster-hunter, gathering her evening meal; for nature is bounteous there in such supplies.

Perchance, the spirit of the pastor dwells there—his mantle thrown around some manly form. If so, let the spirit breathe and give life. Let the mantle be drawn close around, that it may shield against the rude storms of the tempter; and let that heart throb warmly within your manly bosom. Open it to human sympathy, for his was warm with human love! Expand it to the noontide radiance of heaven's own light—for by the infinite mercy of God, his has been made perfect in Eternity.

Mr. Elliot.—Wonders will never cease, Jack. Who would have thought when you left our village I should meet you up here, in the heart of Georgia?

Jack Hinton.—Wonders tread upon each others' heels, sir; but the wonder of seeing *you*, and so many of our old friends here, has tripped all the others up. How is it, that you did not go North?

Mr. Elliot.—Well, because we are tired of going abroad, and knowing so little of our own State. Our watchword now is—"Westward, ho! for Cherokee!"

Jack Hinton.—Where, sir, you will see a new era for Georgia; as if she was gathering new strength to arouse and shake herself from the ashes that have encumbered her.

Mr. Elliot.—Well, we will welcome it as the birth of a new life; and will hope that the blending of the new and the

old may renovate both. How has your occupation prospered since you have been here?

Jack Hinton.—Admirably, sir; we have more scholars applying than we can possibly take. Mary is an excellent wife and teacher, and we expect in a few weeks to move into a large new house of our own, where the next time you come we will be most happy to welcome you.

Mary.—The last part of that sentence is very good, Jack, but take care—you must not trumpet your own praises.

Jack.—It must be admissible of *you*, Mary, and with friends of whom in a few hours we will have only a memory left.

Gonzalez.—Come, Anna, suppose we turn teachers, too. You undertake with your American energy, and I will teach Spanish. What say you? and your first usher after awhile shall be your own son.

Anna.—That would be too decidedly a family affair, Gonzalez; and considering that my Spanish teacher is of so volatile a temperament, I fear that he might take to steam and steam off.

Gonzalez.—You are right, my monitress. Hurra for American women! The first time I felt *that*, Mr. Hinton, was when I heard that your wife was preparing to aid you in teaching, and now I feel it every day. Anna is an excellent teacher. Harry Cleveland! come out here! We have found some strayed friends. Why don't you leave that little curly-headed wife of yours, and make your appearance?

Harry Cleveland.—Because she is my wife, and I won't leave her; but here we are together. Hallo, Jack! I am glad to see you. When did you get here?

Jack.—Not by steam, but ahead of it, Harry. This is our place of residence; in short, I am the schoolmaster of this city of railroads and steam-engines.

Harry.—And a good one, I'll wager my head! Do look

at Miranda and Mary clinging together, like school girls that had been separated a whole day !

Jack.—Yes, and how pleasantly it brings to mind past seasons of toil and relaxation !

Harry.—Yes, it does. Do you remember, Jack, the first day Miranda went to school, when we took a race from the market-house ? By the bye, what has become of Maria Kingston ?

Jack.—Well, she has left her native State, but she has a warm heart, and loves it still. Her mind, which was always ardent and vigorous, has expanded out, and nobly bears her above the frowns of adverse fortune. If you had time to look, you would see a corner of my bookcase devoted to her.

Harry.—We will meet again, and talk over all these old reminiscences. Well, this is a delightful little episode ; a romance in life that will be worth telling—how we have taken each other by surprise.

Jack.—Your wife takes me by surprise, Harry. I can scarcely imagine that she is the fairy-looking girl I left a few years ago : a woman—a matron, and so beautiful !

Mrs. Elliot.—Yes, and that reminds me that we are indebted to the world a chapter. To-morrow, when the western train bears us away, and its last audible grunt is lost in the distance, lay a sheet upon your school desk, Jack, and write it for us ; say that Miranda is a woman and a *Christian*—that she takes lessons from time and receives them from eternity, and that she is as happy as the spirit of love and faith can make her.

Thus it is that Jack Hinton himself appears in the last chapter of this romance, and gets up the steam to help himself on.

Our friends just gone have turned their faces from the sea-board to the mountain.

Mrs. Elliot and Ella remain in Savannah for a time, while John was left in Europe to prepare himself, perhaps, for senator. We hope so, for the country needs him.

Have we neglected any of our friends? There is a tiny figure flitting in and out of Mrs. Hinton's room,—elfish black eyes, that look as if they knew a world of mysteries; locks of hair, black as night, hanging down on each side of her smooth, shining, womanly brow—unnaturally it looks, gleaming above so small a form. This is "little h-Ann"—small and fairy-like still; easy to comprehend, and quick to act as ever. Her mother has joined the Sisters of Charity—her father gone, and the "America" became to her a phantom ship of memory. The only vestige we can see of Madame Ludovico is in the shape of two gold drops hanging down beneath her elfish hair.

She inquired with tearful eyes of her old friends, Adonis and Estella Joyce, and she was told that they were in Savannah, but that she would see them before the summer passed away. Those tiny hands were clapped, those elfish eyes danced with glee, the veins of her little neck throbbed with joy, and so did her heart.

Now, adieu, ye railroads and steam! ye friends and fellow-travellers on the journey of life! Parted and met, and met and parted, ye have passed by! The pressure of your warm palms is still felt; the influence of your warm hearts still remains kindling within our own. May God bless you all!

THE END.

